

ISVAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR

A STORY OF HIS LIFE AND WORK.

BY

SUBAL CHANDRA MITRA.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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To
His Highness ~~Mahtab~~ Adhiraj
Bijay Chand Mahtab Bahadur

OF
BURDWAN,

WHO BY HIS INTELLIGENCE, HONESTY
AND BENEVOLENCE HAS WON THE
ADMIRATION OF ALL BENGAL,

**THIS BOOK
IS DEDICATED**

AS A TOKEN OF SINCERE ESTEEM AND REGARD,
BY HIS HIGHNESS' HUMBLE SERVANT,

The Author.

PREFACE.

The present publication is intended to meet a long-felt desideratum. Biographies of the late venerable Vidyasagar have been written in Bengali by distinguished writers, but no attempt has yet been made to bring out in English an account of the life and career of that eminent man, although more than eleven years have passed away since he left this world. All this long while we have been waiting to see if an abler hand than ourselves would take up this onerous task, but in vain ; so, with great reluctance, we at last feel compelled to take this mighty responsibility upon ourselves. Our sole aim has been to give a clear and faithful account of the life-work of the great pundit in the simplest language at our command ; without endeavouring in the least to gloss over what appeared to us as his short-comings. How far we have succeeded in our attempt it is for the reading public to judge.

We have to express our indebtedness to our venerable countryman Mr. R. C. Dutt C. I. E. for his kindness in writing the Introduction. Indeed, the readiness with which he accepted the task will always be gratefully remembered by the present writer. As regards the body of the work, our heart-felt thanks are due to Babu Behari Lal Sarkar, the veteran author and journalist, from

whose excellent biography of *Vidyasagar* in Bengali, we have got much help in the compilation of this work. His kindness and generosity and the very valuable aid rendered by him all through the course of the writing of the book deserve our most grateful recognition. Without his help, the work would never have been what it is.

Before concluding, we feel it also to be our duty to acknowledge with thanks the help we have received from Pandit Narayan Chandra Vidyaratna in the shape of many anecdotes which he has told us regarding his illustrious father, and this we do accordingly. Thanks are also due to Babu Chandi Charan Banerjee for his kind permission to make extracts from letters contained in his life of Vidyasagar in Bengali.

The book is offered to the public in all humility. We shall feel ourselves sufficiently rewarded for our pains if it is accepted in the spirit in which it is offered.

Calcutta
December, 1902.

S. C. M.

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INTRODUCTION.



There is a good biography of the late Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar in the Bengali language ; but the fame of the venerable Pandit is not confined to Bengal. All India claims him as one of the great and earnest workers of the nineteenth century ; and there were few Englishmen of the past generation who did not appreciate the high character and the distinguished services of that true-hearted Indian who was the friend of Sir Cecil Beadon and the collaborator of Drinkwater Bethune. Mr. Subal Chandra Mitra has therefore done well in compiling an account of Vidyasagar's life in English, and his book will supply a real need.

Vidyasagar will always fill a unique place in Indian history. Raja Ram Mōhan Rai represented the new aspirations and the earnest work of the first generation of his countrymen in the nineteenth century ; Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar reflected their arduous endeavours in the second. English rule and English education were powerful and far reaching influences which called forth new ideas and new efforts from the people. Ram

Mohan responded to these influences in the commencement of the century; Iswar Chandra, during the next thirty years.

The lives of these two great Indian workers fit in curiously in respect of dates. The establishment of the Brahma Samaj, or the Hindu Theistic Society, in 1828, was the crowning work of Ram Mohan Rai's social and religious reforms; in the following year, Iswar Chandra, a gifted and bright-eyed boy, was wending his way from his native village to Calcutta to seek for that education which was to fit him for his life-work. Ram Mohan died in England in 1833; within a few years after that date Iswar Chandra had completed his education at the Sanscrit College, passed a brilliant examination, and won the title of Vidyasagar by which he will always be known by his countrymen.

Lord Wellesley had founded the Fort William College in 1800 for the education of young civilians on their arrival in India in the vernacular languages; and young Vidyasagar, then only 21 years of age, was appointed Head Pandit of this College in 1841. The appointment had great influence on his life, as it led him to take up the study of the English language, of which he had learnt very little before. It was an eventful period of Vidyasagar's life; and he came in daily contact with some of the best Englishmen in Calcutta,

and some of the greatest Indian workers of the day. He helped the young Durga Charan Banerjæ (father of our distinguished countryman, the Honorable Surendra Nath Banerjæ) to the post of Head writer to the Fort William College ; he learnt English with the young and earnest Raj Narain Basu who subsequently distinguished himself in Bengali Literature ; he made the acquaintance of Raja Radha Kant Dev then the venerable head of the orthodox Hindu community ; and he formed that early friendship, which lasted through life, with the talented Akhay Kumar Datta, who subsequently rivalled Vidyasagar himself in his patriotic work, as in his high literary reputation.

Lord Hardinge, then Governor General of India, paid a visit to Fort William College in 1844, and had a long talk with Vidyasagar. And when the hundred and one "Hardinge schools" were founded in the different districts of Bengal during the two subsequent years, the selection of teachers for these schools was left to Mr. Marshall and to Vidyasagar. It is a remarkable and a characteristic fact that in the exercise of his extensive patronage, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was never influenced by personal considerations, and was never untrue to the trust which was reposed on him. A touching instance is recorded of the manner in which he passed over his own claims to appoint

one whom he considered worthier, at the time of which we are writing. Vidyasagar was drawing a a poor pay of Rs 50 a month. The appointment which fell vacant was that of teacher of the Grammar class in the Sanscrit College, and carried a pay of Rs 90. The post was offered to him on the recommendation of Mr. Marshall. But Vidyasagar refused the appointment because he considered the eminent Tara Nath Tarkavachaspati a more profound grammarian. The appointment was given to Tarkavachaspati, and Vidyasagar walked all the way from Calcutta to Calna to inform him of the appointment. Such a rare instance of disinterestedness astonished Tarkavachaspati himself. "Glory to you, Vidyasagar,"—he exclaimed,—“You are not a man, but a god in human form !”

The post of Assistant Secretary to the Sanscrit College fell vacant in 1845. Rossomoy Dutt, one of the most distinguished men of his times, was then the Secretary ; and he had early discerned Vidyasagar's great talents and energy. He requested the Education Council to appoint Vidyasagar to the post on a higher pay than it then carried, which was Rs 50 only. The pay was not increased, but Vidyasagar's appointment was sanctioned. His great energy found a wider vent in this larger field of work, and he earnestly endeavoured to remodel Sanscrit education, and to bring

it more in touch with modern life, and the requirements of modern education. His drastic reforms frightened Rossomoy Dutt himself; and when some of his suggestions were disapproved, young Vidyasagar resigned his appointment and retired from the field of his labours. This was however only for a short time. He was reappointed to the Sanscrit College in 1850 as a Professor of Sanscrit Literature, and submitted a full and exhaustive report on the reforms which he advocated. Rossomoy Dutt foresaw what was coming, and yielded his place to the enthusiastic young reformer by timely retirement. The posts of Secretary and Assistant Secretary were then combined into one, that of Principal of the College; and Vidyasagar was appointed the first Principal of the Sanscrit College, with full discretion to remodel, reform, and simplify Sanscrit education for the benefit of his countrymen.

The fame of the young and enthusiastic educationist, then only thirty years of age, spread far and wide. The greatest and most enlightened Zeminders of Bengal reckoned him as their friend. Eminent literary men welcomed their new colleague. Englishmen inspired with a sincere desire to help the cause of progress in India found in Vidyasagar a worthy collaborator. For Vidyasagar was versed in the learning of his fathers, and the traditional knowledge of the past. He had won high dis-

tion by his Sanscrit learning, and had become the Principal of the Sanscrit College. And more than this, his open mind received and assimilated all that was healthy and life-inspiring outside the range of Indian thought ; and with a robust physique and a robust heart he ceaselessly endeavoured for reform. He threw his whole soul in the cause of Female education ; and the eminent Drinkwater Bethune welcomed the talented and tireless colleague. Sir Fredrick Halliday, the first Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, appreciated Vidyasagar's labours, and on the death of Bethune, he placed the Female school, known as Bethune school, under Vidyasagar's management.

But educational work of a yet more responsible kind was in store for Vidyasagar. Lord William Bentinck's scheme of spreading education in India through the English language had only partially solved the great problem ; the scheme was completed by Sir Charles Wood's famous education despatch of 1854 which provided for vernacular education, leading up to English education. There was no man in Bengal worthier to give effect to this new scheme than Vidyasagar, then principal of the Sanscrit College. He submitted a masterly report on the subject, and he was appointed a special Inspector of Hooghly, Burdwan, Midnapur, and Nadiya Districts, on a pay of Rs 200, in addition to Rs 300 which he drew

as Principal of the Sanscrit College. He worked with characteristic energy and zeal ; established schools for boys and girls in the four districts ; and also superintended the work of the Sanscrit College and of the Normal School in Calcutta. It is characteristic of Vidyasagar's generous nature that he induced and almost forced his literary rival, the talented Akhay Kumar Datta, to accept the appointment of Head teacher of the Normal School.

In the midst of all these labours Vidyasagar never forgot his partiality to literature ; and towards the close of 1854 he published his great Bengali work, *Sakuntala*, an adaptation from the well-known Sanscrit Drama of the same name. And three years after appeared his greatest work, *Sitar-Banabas*, a Bengali adaptation of another equally well-known Sanscrit play. In some respects the position of Iswar Chandra and Akhay Kumar in Bengali prose literature is unique. The earlier prose of Ram Mohan Rai and his contemporaries was somewhat crude, though forceful and expressive ; and it is no exaggeration to state that the modern elegant prose literature of Bengal has been created under the formative touch of Iswar Chandra and Akhay Kumar. The services they have rendered to their country may be aptly compared to those of the writers of Queen Anne's time, who shaped modern English prose, and

made it more elegant and elastic than the style of the Elizabethian Age.

A still loftier endeavour occupied Vidyasagar about this time. With a courage which has seldom been excelled in the history of social reforms, he, a Brahman of Brahmans, and a Pundit of Pundits, proclaimed in 1835 that the perpetual widowhood of Hindu women, who had lost their husbands, was not sanctioned by the *Sastras* ; and that the marriage of Hindu widows was permitted. The storm of indignation which this pronouncement evoked was unparalleled in the history of the nineteenth century. The discussion was taken up by every town and every village in Bengal. Iswar Chandra Gupta, the veteran Bengali poet, and Dasarathi, the greatest of Bengali bards, hurled their satire on the young reformer. Villagers sang of the great Pundit's revolutionary opinions in their village gatherings and festivities. The weavers of Santipur wove songs about the remarriage of widows in the borders of *sarees* worn by the women of Bengal. Men and women in every home in Bengal spoke of the great social revolution contemplated. And the venerable Raja Radha Kanta Deb himself petitioned Government against the reform.

Amidst this outburst of indignation, the earnest reformer stood unmoved and unappalled. He issued a second work, replying to the arguments

which had been brought against him, replying to them with a wealth of learning and a cogency of reasoning which virtually closed the controversy. More than this, he enlisted the foremost men of the time,—Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Ram Gopal Ghose, Pratap Chandra Sinha and others, in the cause he had espoused. An appeal was made to the Government to declare that the sons of remarried Hindu widows should be considered legitimate heirs, and a law to that effect was passed in 1856.

Education in Bengal received a fresh start with the establishment of the University of Calcutta by Lord Canning in January 1857. The number of members was then only 39, of whom only 6 were Indians, and Vidyasagar was one of the Indian members. But his official connection with education was approaching its end ; and it is painful to refer to the unpleasantness which marked its close. The Council of education was replaced by a Director of Public Instruction ; and the first Director, Gordon Young, was a young and inexperienced officer. It is the old story over again ; Vidyasagar the reformer of Sanscrit education in Calcutta, the founder of Vernacular education in the Central Districts of Bengal, the promoter of Female education, the earnest reformer and distinguished literary man, could not aspire to the highest educational appointment in his

country because he was an Indian. The young Englishman who was placed above him did not appreciate his labours, and it is even said, sometimes treated him with scant courtesy. The veteran Educationist felt himself unjustly treated ; and in 1858, before he had reached his fortieth year, Vidyasagar severed his connexion with the Government, and resigned his appointments, carrying a pay of Rs. 500, without a retiring pension or gratuity for all the work he had done. "He carries with him the acknowledgments of the Government for his long and zealous service in the cause of Native education,"—was the concluding remark in the Government letter of the 25th september 1858, accepting Vidyasagar's resignation.

It is pleasing to note that the field of Vidyasagar's labours and of his benevolent charities was widened after he had retired from service ; and that he proved himself a greater man in retirement than in service. As a literary man he had no equal in Bengal, until the genius of Bankim Chandra came to be recognized at a later date ; as a philanthropist and a benevolent helper of the poor and the needy, Vidyasagar stands in the highest rank achieved by any man in any age or country. The princely income derived from his books was devoted to the relief of suffering and distress ; hundreds of poor widows owed him their maintenance ;

hundreds of helpless orphans owed him their education. His name became a household word in Bengal; the rich and the poor loved him alike; those who opposed him respected him as much as his colleagues. The richest Zemindars of the land delighted to honour the venerable Pundit who lived a simple life, whose courage was indomitable, whose charity was inexhaustible. Sir Cecil Beadon, then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, often consulted the retired educationist, and rejoiced in his company and conversation. And twenty years after his retirement, the Government of India honoured itself by bestowing a decoration of the Order of the Indian Empire on the greatest Indian then living.

I met the venerable Pundit sometimes, and corresponded with him often, during the last twenty years of his life, 1871 to 1891. He still spoke with animation of his earlier work, of his struggles, his successes, and his failures. He spoke of men with whom he had worked, and the list included all the true workers of the generation,—Prasanna Kumar Tagore and Ram Gopal Ghose, Harish Chandra Mukerji and Kristo Das Pal, Madanmohan Tarkalankar and Madhusudan Datta, Digambar Mitra and Rajendralal Mitra, and others of equal eminence. The history of our national work in the nineteenth century is full of encouragement and hope; and that history connects itself

with the story of Vidyasagar's life more intimately than with the life of any other man.

It was often my privilege to accompany Vidyasagar in his early morning walks ; and sometimes I saw him in his house and was permitted to inspect the splendid collection of books, Sanscrit and English, which the Pundit possessed. Vidyasagar's conversation was as rich in anecdotes as his experience was varied, and was lighted up by his native wit which never failed him to the last days of his life. He often sent me a collection of his books whenever I established a circulating library in the districts where I was employed ; and when in 1885 I commenced my Bengali translation of the Rig Veda hymns,—amidst a perfect storm of opposition from a section of my orthodox countrymen,—the generous-hearted Vidyasagar gave me his support and help.

His health was already failing about this time ; and he often retired from Calcutta to the more bracing climate of Karmatar where he had a country-seat ; and crowds of simple villagers came to see him there, and to receive the help which he never denied to the needy. He distributed simple medicines to the poor, and attended to their needs with a kindness which touched them. The end came at last ; and in 1891, the greatest man in Bengal passed away from among us, at the full age of three score and ten.

I have ventured to glean these facts from Mr. Subal Chandra's "Life", in the hope that the entire book may be studied by our young countrymen with the care and attention it deserves. To assign to Vidyasagar his true place in history, to trace the influences which shaped his character, and the influences which he himself created and left behind him ; to delineate the true nature of his work and the endeavours of those who lived and worked around him,—in one word to point out how the times called forth the man, and the man fulfilled the mission entrusted to him,—all this requires a longer preparation and a work of larger proportions. Mr. Subal Chandra has not attempted such a task. His simpler object is to collect in a readable form the main facts of Vidyasagar's life, and to place before his readers some important documents which ought to be preserved.

Among these documents the portion of Vidyasagar's autobiography which has been quoted in the opening chapter is deeply interesting. Other men anxiously trace their descent from ancestors of rank and wealth ; it is characteristic of Vidyasagar that he proudly traced his descent from men who were poor, beyond our modern conceptions of poverty. There is nothing more touching in the autobiography of any man that I have ever read than Vidyasagar's simple account of the almost

appalling poverty in which his father Thakurdas lived and was brought up. One day, pressed by the pangs of hunger, Thakurdas sat faint and pale and speechless, before a shop where fried rice was sold. The woman, who sold the rice, enquired of the boy what he needed, and the hungry boy only ventured to for a little water to drink. With the kindliness of her race, the poor woman not only gave him to drink, but also supplied him with some curd and sweetened rice,—and even asked the boy to come again to the shop whenever he went without his daily food. And she was true to her word, and poor Thakurdas came again and again to the kind-hearted woman who had helped him in his need. There is a touch of true Hindu life in this simple story.

CALCUTTA, }
November 1902. }

ROMESH C. DUTT.



Vidyasagar at an advanced age.

THE LIFE OF Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND ANCESTRY.

Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar * was born on the 26th day of September, in the year 1820, corresponding with the twelfth of Asvin, 1227, Bengali Era, of a poor, but respectable Brahman family, at Birsingha, a small village in the district of Midnapore, in the lower provinces of Bengal. His father's name was Thakurdas Bandyopadhyay. Isvar Chandra was his first-born son. The village Birsingha is 52 miles to the west of Calcutta, the metropolis of India, and is only 5 miles from Ghatal, which is one of the subdivisions of the Midnapore district. But Birsingha was not the original home of the family. Vidyasagar's grandfather had removed there from Banamalipur, where the family had been living for several generations. Banamalipur is a village in the Hugli district, lying

* The word literally means *an ocean of knowledge*, an educational title, won by him from the Sanskrit College of Calcutta, his real family surname being Bandyopadhyay, which is generally known as Banarji.

to the west of Tarakesvar, a sacred place with the Hindus, where thousands of pilgrims from different parts of India assemble annually to offer their *pūja* (prayer and offerings) to their god Tarakesvar or *Siva*. The life and character of a man are greatly influenced by his surroundings. This was amply verified in Vidyasagar. We should therefore begin with a brief description of the family, he was born in. His pedigree may uncontrovertibly be traced to his great grand-father. In this respect it would be better to quote what Vidyasagar himself has said in his auto-biography :—

“My paternal great-grandfather, Bhuvanesvar Vidyalkar,* had five sons, of whom the eldest was Nrisingha Ram, the second, gangadhar, the third, Ramjay, the fourth, Panchanan, and the fifth, Ramcharan. The third, Ramjay Tarkabhushan, was my grandfather. After the death of my great-grandfather (father's grandfather), his first and second sons managed the family affairs. In a short time, my grandfather, Ramjay Tarkabhushan, had some dispute with his elder brothers about the family property, and soon the dispute rose into downright quarrel and breach of brotherly friendship. Ultimately, my grandfather left the village in disgust.

“There lived, at that time, in the village of Birsingha, a famous Pandit (profound sanskrit scholar) named Umapati Tarkasiddhanta.* My

* A Sanskrit title of profound education.

grandfather, Ramjay Tarkabhushan, was married to Durga Devi, the third daughter of Umapati Tarkasiddhanta. Ramjay Tarkabhushan, had by this wife, two sons and four daughters. Of the two sons, Thakurdas was the first, and Kalidas, the second. Of the four daughters, the oldest was Mangala, the second, Kamala, the third, Govindamani, and the fourth, Annapurna. Thakurdas was my father.

"After Ramjay Tarkabhushan, my grandfather, had left his native village, his wife Durga Devi was living with the family at Banamalipur. But, unfortunately, the brother's of her husband, in a short time, began to look down upon and neglect her and her children ; and the neglect soon rose to such a height that she was compelled to leave the village, and take shelter in her father's house at Birsingha. For a few days she lived here comfortably, but presently her misfortune began anew, for she soon saw that she could not live peacefully in her father's house, as she had imagined.

"Umapati Tarkasiddhanta, the father of Durga Devi, had grown too old to look to the management of the family affairs, which had consequently to be left in the hands of his son, Ram Sundar Vidyabhushan.* This Vidyabhushan and his wife were not well disposed towards Durga Devi and her children, and were always a source of oppression and terror to them. The husband and wife

* A Sanskrit title of scholarly education,

treated them with such disdain and inhumanity that Durga Devi had no other alternative than to leave at once this dreadful shelter, namely her father's house. Her father, Umapati Tarkasiddhanta, was deeply and sincerely pained at the conduct of his son and daughter-in-law, but he was now quite helpless himself. He, therefore, had a hut built for his daughter in the neighbourhood, not very far off from his own house ; and here Durga Devi began to live with her children, and passed her days in a most wretched state.

"At that time, many poor, helpless women of Bengal earned their livelihood by spinning cotton into thread by means of a spinning wheel, known by the name of *Charka*, and by selling them to the weavers. Durga Devi was now compelled to take to this industry. But the income from this source was too small to maintain herself and her six children. Her father helped her now and then, but even this, added to her own income, was barely sufficient to feed and clothe them. As a matter of fact, Durga Devi was most miserably circumstanced, and she always shed tears at the sight of her barely-fed children. Her eldest son, Thakurdas, was at this time fourteen or fifteen years old. At this young age, he, with his mother's permission, left her cottage, and proceeded to Calcutta in search of livelihood.

"Sabharam Vachaspati,* a near kinsman of

* A title of profound Sanskrit education.

ours, had settled in Calcutta. His son, Jaganmohan Nayalankar,* had been a pupil of the famous professor, Chaturbhuj Nyayratna,* and had been in great favour with him. Consequently, through highly favourable recommendations of the professor, he soon rose to eminence, and became, in his turn, a distinguished professor of the Nyay School of philosophy. Thakurdas presented himself before this near kinsman, and, with tearful eyes, explained the reason of his sudden appearance in Calcutta, and besought his shelter. Jaganmohan Nyayalankar was now well-off, and he generously fed and helped the needy. It was not, therefore, strange that he easily and gladly yielded to the requests of a young boy of his ancestral blood, and consented to give him food and shelter.

"Before leaving his mother, brother, and sisters, Thakurdas had read the *Sankshiptasar Vyakaran* (a Sanskrit grammar) first at Banamalipur, his paternal home, and then at Birsingha, the birth-place of his mother. When he thus found shelter in the house of his near kinsman, who was a famous Sanskrit scholar and professor, it was at first arranged that he should apply himself to the study of that ancient language (Sanskrit), and his own inclinations too were in favour of Sanskrit education. But the difficulty was that it would not easily fulfil the ends for which he had come to Calcutta. The recollection of his mother, brother, and sisters,

* A title of profound Sanskrit education.

whom he had left in a most deplorable situation, made him forego this design. At last, it was definitely settled that he should attend to such education, as would soon enable him to earn some money.

"At that time, a little knowledge of English easily procured berths in European mercantile firms; and it was, therefore, thought advisable for Thakurdas to have a little English instruction, instead of Sanskrit. But English education was not easily obtainable then, because there were only a limited number of English schools, and these were resorted to only by the rich, as they were very costly, and the poor could not afford to pay for such education. Under the circumstances, it was quite impossible for poor, helpless Thakurdas to obtain his English education in a school. It was finally settled that he should read English with a friend of Jaganmohan Nyayalankar's, who had a tolerable knowledge of English, and who, at the request of his friend, the famous Sanskrit professor, consented to give Thakurdas lessons in English. This gentleman was employed in a mercantile office, and so he had no time during the day to impart his gratuitous instruction to Thakurdas. He told the boy to come to him after night-fall, and the poor pupil daily attended the night school and received lessons free of cost.

"It has been said before, that Jaganmohan Nyayalankar used to give food and lodging to many poor outsiders, who had very little or no

relation with him. In the evening, the feeding of these poor people was finished immediately after sun-set. And this was the time when Thakurdas had to leave Nyaylankar's house and go to his teacher for the sake of a little English education; and when he returned from his teacher's house, it was too late, and he had to pass the night without food. This happened to him every night, and he thus grew thinner and weaker day by day. One day, his teacher asked him the cause, and he, with tearful eyes, explained to him the real cause of this sad change. While this conversation was going on, a kind-hearted gentleman of the *Sudra* caste was sitting there. He was deeply moved at the sad tale, and he told Thakurdas that he should no longer lodge in the house of Jaganmohan Nyayalankar, and that if he could cook his food, he was ready to give him (Thakurdas) food and shelter. As was expected, Thakurdas was highly delighted at the proposal, and readily accepted the kind offer. The next day he left his former refuge, and took shelter in the house of his new benevolent patron.

"But the earnings of this kind-hearted benevolent gentleman were not equal to his generosity. He was an ordinary broker, and earned a very scanty livelihood. He lived from hand to mouth, yet his kind heart always melted at the tale of other people's distress. Thakurdas considered himself very fortunate that he now had two bellyful meals every day. But this happy state of things

did not last long. As ill luck would have it, in a short time, the paltry income of this benevolent benefactor was still reduced, and what he daily earned, was not always sufficient to maintain two persons with comfort. He used to leave his house early in the morning, and toiled hard to earn a few pice, not only for his own sake, but also for the sake of the poor Brahman boy, whom he had kindly taken under his protection. But, unfortunately, many a day he could not return to his house in time, and consequently, on those days, Thakurdas had to remain without mid-day meal.

"Thakurdas had no other property than a small brass *thala* (shallow dish) and a *lota* (waterpot) of the same metal. He used to eat his rice from the *thala*, and drink his water from the *lota*. In some parts of India, even in Calcutta, a few teak leaves stitched together are used by the poor to eat their rice from. Now, Thakurdas thought within himself thus: — 'The purposes of a *thala* may be well-served by teak-leaves, I shall be able to manage the eating of my rice even without a *thala*. So if I part with it I shall not feel its want. Let me sell this *thala* and retain the *lota*. The sale proceeds shall be my pocket money. I shall use this money in cases of utmost emergency. The day I shall be deprived of my midday meal, I shall lay out a pice in buying something to eat, and thus save myself from starvation.' Having thus bethought himself, he went one day to a brazier's shop, and offered the

thala for sale. But the brazier declined to buy the *thala*, saying that purchase of old plates and utensils sometimes threw them into great difficulties, as most of the articles thus purchased were stolen property. Thakurdas entreated the brazier earnestly, but he turned a deaf ear. He then went to the other braziers, one after another, but none of them yielded to his request. Greatly dejected at the disappointment, he returned to his lodging, quite as helpless as ever.

"One noon, when the sun was in its zenith, Thakurdas under intense pressure of hunger, began to pace up and down the street, in the hope that his mind would thereby be diverted from the thoughts of want of food, and he would thus forget the pangs of hunger. Unconsciously, by slow movements, he walked from Barabazar to Thanthania, a distance of nearly two miles. But far from the results he had anticipated, the physical labour caused by his pedestrianism, kindled his appetite more fiercely, and he was so much overcome with hunger and thirst, that he was quite unable to move farther. Presently, he found himself standing before a shop, where a middle-aged widow was selling such poor victuals, as *Muri* (fried husked rice) and *murki* (fried paddy soaked in molasses). On seeing him thus standing, the woman asked him kindly, "Why are you standing here, my boy?" Thakurdas answered that he was thirsty, and begged for a little water to drink. The kind woman very affectionately

told him to sit down, and thinking that it would not be proper to give the Brahman boy only a little water with nothing to eat, gave him some *murki* and some water. She gazed at him as he greedily devoured the *murki*, and asked him whether he had eaten any food that day. Thakurdas replied, 'No, mother, I have had nothing to eat to-day till now.' Thereupon the kind-hearted woman told him to desist from drinking water, and to wait a little. She at once hastened to a milkman's shop, and came back with some curd, which she graciously placed before Thakurdas, and presenting him with some more *murki*, pressed him to make a belly-ful meal of the curd and *murki*. After the meal had been over, the benevolent woman, by kind and affectionate words, drew out from Thakurdas all particulars of his circumstances, and at last told him to come to her, whenever he would be in want of food.*

"Henceforth whenever he felt the pangs of hunger, and could not procure food in the daytime, he used to go to the kind-hearted woman, and she was always very glad to feed him heartily in the manner related before.

"Some time after this, Thakurdas, with the help of his protector, secured a berth worth two

* The relation of this incident by Thakurdas led his son, Vidyasagar, to begin to adore and revere the female sex. Vidyasagar always cherished feeling of reverence towards women in general.

Rupees* a month. He was highly delighted at this appointment, but did not leave the protection of his benefactor, who had given him shelter in times of dire need. He lived in the same house with his protector as before, and without minding in the least his own privations, began to regularly send the two rupees every month to his mother to mitigate her sufferings. He was very intelligent and industrious, and performed his duties most willingly and cheerfully. For this reason, his employers, wheresoever he was employed, were all highly satisfied with him.

"In two or three years, Thakurdas had a pay of five rupees a month. The sufferings of his mother, brother, and sisters were now much relieved. At this time, my grandfather (Thakurdas's

* At the present rate of exchange, one rupee is equivalent to 15 pence.

The reader may smile at the idea of an income of two rupees a month. But at the time of which we are speaking, this amount small as it may seem, was sufficient to maintain a little family. The articles of living were very cheap. There was a time when rice sold at two maunds a rupee ; mustard oil eight to ten seers ; milk, one maund ; vegetables the poor people grew in the compounds of their houses or procured from the neighbouring fields ; fish they fished in tanks and rivers. The people were less luxurious. They were content with coarse rice and cloth. The men longed not for European shoes and boots, nor the women for fine clothes and jewelry. To be brief, they had very little need of money. Woe to the country that those days are past, perhaps never to return.

father) returned to his native place. At first, he went to Banamalipur, but not finding his wife and children there, he came to Birsingha, and there joined his family. At his return home after an interval of seven or eight years, every one was delighted. He considered it humiliating to live in his father-in-law's house or in its neighbourhood. He, therefore, designed to remove with his family to Banamalipur, his paternal home. But when Durga Devi, his wife, related with tears in her eyes, the inhuman conduct of his brothers, he gave up his design, and most reluctantly consented to settle down permanently in Birsingha. It was in this wise that Birsingha became our place of abode.

* After a short stay at Birsingha, Ramjay Tarkabhushan, my grandfather, came down to Calcutta, to see his son, Thakurdas. When he heard from Thakurdas's benefactor and protector of his son's patience, forbearance, and diligence, he was highly delighted, and showered upon his son his choicest blessings. At this time, there lived, in the Barabazar quarter of Calcutta, a certain well-to-do gentleman of the *Uttar Rarhiya Kayastha* family, by name Bhagavat Charan Sinha. My grandfather had a great intimacy with this gentleman, who was a perfect pattern of a Hindu householder. He was very kind and benevolent. On hearing from my grandfather everything connected with him, from the time of his leaving his native place, he was deeply touched, and proposed that henceforth Thakurdas should put up with him.

in his house, and that he would undertake to provide him with proper meals, adding, at the same time, that when Thakurdas was able to cook his food, there was not the slightest chance of any inconvenience.

"My grandfather, Ramjay Tarkabhushan, was very pleased at the offer, and readily accepted it. He placed Thakurdas under the care of this kind gentleman, and then returned to Birsingha. From this time forward, the troubles of Thakurdas with respect to his meals were over. On receiving regularly the necessary bellyful meals twice a day, he considered himself entering into a new life. This happy combination did not only put an end to his troubles of proper food, but was also the means of providing him with a better appointment. Bhagavat Babu secured for him a situation worth eight rupees a month. When his mother came to learn that her son, Thakurdas, had got an appointment bringing a monthly salary of eight rupees, her delight knew no bounds. *

"Thakurdas was, at this time, twenty-three or

* It is said that Thakurdas's younger brother, Kali Das, came down to Calcutta, at this time, to obtain English-education. When Kali Das had obtained a tolerable knowledge of English and was fit for employment, Thakurdas left him in charge of his office, and he himself began business as a dealer in silk. But he soon found that his younger brother was not quite up to the mark and worked very shabbily. He, therefore, rejoined his former office, of his own motion, from a sense of duty.

twenty-four years old. My grandfather considering this a marriageable age, married him to Bhagavati Devi, second daughter of Ramkanta Tarkavagis * of Goghat. This Bhagavati Devi was my mother. In her childhood, she had been brought up with the family of her maternal grandfather."

Ramkanta Tarkavagis had, in the prime of his youth, lost the sanity of his mind. His father-in-law, Panchanan Vidyavagis † of village Patul, therefore, took him with his wife and children to his own house, and housed them there. In spite of medical treatment of different kinds, for a long time, by experts, Ramkanta did not recover from his malady, and he died quite insane. It was for this reason that Vidyasagar's mother, Bhagavati Devi, had been brought up in the house of her maternal grandfather. Ramkanta Tarkavagis had two daughters, of whom Bhagavati Devi was the younger. Her mother's name was Ganga Devi, who again was the eldest daughter of Panchanan Vidyavagis. He had five other children, four sons and one daughter, besides Ganga Devi.

Vidyasagar was famous for his spiritedness, truthfulness, frankness and love of independence. It appears that he imbibed these virtues from his father and grandfather. Ramjay Tarkabhushan, his grandfather, was a man of independent spirit. He never flattered anybody, nor was he ever daunted

* A Sanskrit title of education.

† A Sanskrit degree or title of great learning.

by the threats of malicious persons. It was this love of independence and spiritedness that turned his brother-in-law (wife's brother) and his partisans to be his enemies. His idea was that the country, at that time, was devoid of men (*i. e.* good men) and that it was full of beasts. His amiability, modesty and truthfulness were equal to his spiritedness. It is said that while he was travelling to the different pilgrimages after leaving his home, one night he heard somebody say to him in dream :— "Your wife has left your native village, Banamalipur, and has been living in Birsingha." At this, he returned to Birsingha, and once again took charge of his family.

The land-owner of the village, Birsingha, offered to him his homestead land free of rent, and his friends and relations urged him to accept the offer. But he thankfully declined it. Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, in his auto-biography, thus speaks of his grand-father :—

"He never depended upon, or flattered, any body. It was his firm conviction that death was preferable to dependence on another person. He was a vegetarian, and ate only one meal a day. His character was stainless and pure, and he always took great care to devote most of his time and attention, to the worship of his Heavenly Father."

Ramjay Tarkasiddhanta's bodily strength was equal to the strength of his mind. Body and mind are so very closely connected that the strength

or weakness of the one is generally followed by the strength or weakness of the other. We have seen, with our own eyes, the truth of this verified in Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, and we have heard of it in his grandfather, Ramjay Tarkasiddhanta. Ramjay always travelled fearlessly with an iron cudgel in his hand. One day, on his way to Midnapore from Birsingha, a bear came upon him. At the sight of the animal, he took his stand behind a tree. The bear tried to seize him with its fore paws. No sooner had the beast stretched out its paws to catch hold of Ramjay, than he seized it by its out-stretched paws, and began to rub the ugly beast against the tree. Soon the bear was nearly dead. Seeing that the brute was completely overpowered and almost dead, Ramjay left it really and proceeded on his journey. But the beast, was not, dead, and no sooner was his back turned, than it rose, and tore his back with its sharp nails. Ramjay had now no other alternative than to let fall his iron cudgel on the bear's head, which killed it on the spot. He had to suffer for upwards of a month from the effects of the wound, and the sore mark was visible on his back as long as he lived.

When Thakurdas was able to work well, and take good care of the family, his father, Ramjay Tarkasiddhanta, again went out on a pilgrimage, and returned home a second time, when his grandson, Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, was in the womb

of his mother. It is said that, one night, when he was staying on the top of a hill, Ramjay dreamed that a good male child, who was destined to do much real good to the country and to win a world-wide renown, was going to take its birth in his family. This dream made him forsake his ascetic life and return again to his home. This child was Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar.

When Ramjay returned a second time to Bir-singha, he saw that his daughter-in-law, Bhagavati Devi, was really pregnant, but at the same time quite insane. She had lost her sanity from the moment she had conceived the child in her womb. This insanity lasted throughout the whole period of her pregnancy. Strange to say, that although with continued treatment of different kinds for ten months failed to cure her, yet no sooner was she delivered of the child, Isvar Chandra, than she began to regain her sanity even without any medical help. In a short time, she was as sane as ever, and continued so to the last day of her life. Kind-hearted as she naturally was, she was ever afterwards seen to feed and clothe the poor. As is the custom with unalloyed Hindu women, she cooked food with her own hands, and took great delight in distributing it to the guests and the needy, without distinction of caste or creed. Her generosity, kindness and benevolence were unparalleled. We shall try to give a more detailed description of her character later on. But we may mention here, in

passing, that kindness of heart, which figured so conspicuously in Vidyasagar's character, and endeared him to all classes of people, and which caused his name to be lovingly cherished in memory by everybody, was due mostly to his ever-kind and bounteous mother. George Herbert used to say :—"One good mother is worth a hundred school masters." The truth of this saying has been verified in all such great men, as Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Napoleon Bonaparte, and others.

Formerly in India, the science of astronomy, palmistry, and fortune-telling, generally known by the name of astrology, like all other sciences, had risen to perfection. Even at the time of Vidyasagar's birth, there were many astrologers, palmisters and fortune-tellers, who could by the help of their occult science, foretell the future of a new-born child. Before Vidyasagar's birth, Bhavananda Bhattacharya, a great astrologer of the time, had predicted that Bhagavati Devi (Vidyasagar's mother) would give birth to a child, who would be a bodily incarnation of humanity, and that after the birth of the baby, she would recover her former sanity. This prediction of Bhavananda Bhattacharya was fulfilled to the letter. It was for this, or some similar, reason that Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar was a great admirer and advocate of this occult science.

CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY INSTRUCTION.

It was noon when Isvar Chandra took his birth. His father, Thakurdas, was not at home, at that time. He had gone to the neighbouring *Hat* (market) of Kumarganja, which was nearly a mile off from his village. On his way back from the market, he met his father Ramjay, who told him that a bull-calf was born that day in their house. By this he alluded to his newly born grandchild by way of joke, but in this jest he darkly hinted at the future character of Vidyasagar. What he really meant by this joke, was that the child would be as stubborn as a bull-calf ; and, most probably, he foresaw this from the marks on the child's fore-head and the lines on the palm of his hand. Besides, the science of astrology showed that the child was born at the moment when the moon was connected with the *bull** (one of the signs of the zodiac). Those, who are born at such a time, must be stubborn and strong-minded like a bull. The *Sastras* say :—

সন্মার্গবৃত্তোহতিতরাং প্রসন্নঃ সত্যপ্রতিজ্ঞোহতিবিশালকীর্তিঃ ।

প্রসন্নগাত্ৰোহতিবিশালনেত্রো বৃষে স্থিতে রাজিগতো প্রমুতঃ ॥

—ভোজ ।

* This is an abstruse subject of the Hindu Astronomy, and to understand it clearly, one must study the science thoroughly.

"One, born at a time when the master of the night (i. e. the moon) is at the *bull*, must be righteous, ever-pleased, complaisant, true to his word, far-famed, large-eyed, strong-bodied, and of amiable appearance."

Stubbornness was one of the principal features of Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar's character, and it was conspicuously visible in most of his acts. Stubbornness generates fixedness of purpose. It was for this reason that Stephen Gerard employed under him men of stubborn character. Isvar Chandra had a great fixedness of purpose. Whatever he handled, whether good or bad, he never left undone or half-done.

Thakurdas could not grasp the real purport of his father's jest. He understood the simple meaning that a bull-calf was actually born in their house, as at that time one of their cows was pregnant and her delivery was expected every moment. Both father and son soon returned home. Thakurdas went into the cow-shed, and found that the cow was not yet delivered. Thakurdas's father then took him to the nursery, and showed him the child, saying, at the same time, that this was the bull-calf he referred to, and then explained its real meaning.

Sambhu Chandra Vidyaratna, one of the younger brothers of Isvar Chandra, says in his life of Vidyasagar :—

"Our grandfather, Ramjay Bandyopadhyay,

who had then returned from his pilgrimage, wrote with lac-dye a few words in the lower part of the newly-born child's tongue, before the severance of its umbilical cord, and then told his wife, Durga Devi, that as an effect of this writing the child would be incapacitated for a little while from sucking the breast of its mother. He also said that the infant's delicate tongue, being handled by his hard, rough hand, the child would stammer for a time ; but that, being born at a most auspicious moment, the child would in future become a great man, and that his fame would spread far and wide." All this, Sambhu Chandra says, he heard from his father and from his paternal and maternal grandmothers. But Vidyasagar himself has made no mention of this in his auto-biography.

Shortly after Isvar Chandra's birth, Kenaram Acharyya, a great astrologer of the time, prepared his horoscope, and he was greatly surprised at the indications. He foresaw that the future of Vidyasagar was very auspicious, and that he would become a great man. That the Hindu astrology is no myth, but a well-founded science, is clearly proved from Vidyasagar's horoscope. All its predictions were fulfilled to the letter. As the subject is very abstruse and incomprehensible without a careful study of the science, we forbear entering into a discussion of Isvar Chandra's horoscope.

As we have said before, Isvar Chandra was born at a propitious moment, and this was veri-

fied by the surrounding circumstances. Slowly, but surely, his father's troubles lessened. He began to have a larger income, and soon there was a sudden change, on all sides, for the better. There was a general talk in the neighbourhood that a most fortunate child was born to Thakurdas Bandyopadhyay. Hence Isvar Chandra was a great favourite with the neighbours. The grandfather, Ramjay Tarkasiddhanta, gave the child the name, Isvar (which means *Lord*).

The village Birsingha was not in a very flourishing state at that time. It had no English-teaching school. There was only a vernacular *pathasala* (primary school) for giving little boys an elementary education in reading and writing the Bengali language. After a few year's training in this school, the sons of comparatively well-to-do Brahmans were sent to *tols* (seats of Sanskrit education), where they had to study hard for several years, and then undergo a set of examinations held by the professor himself. After the final examination, the professor gave the pupils each a degree or title, and then dismissed them, who, in their turn, then opened *Tols* and set themselves up as independent professors of Sanskrit.

Isvar Chandra was now five years old, and it was time, according to the Hindu Sastras, that he should begin to read and write. At this time, there was a primary *pathsala* in Birsingha under the teachership of Sanatan Sarkar. School-masters of

this class were generally rigorous and fond of using their rods freely. They were strict followers of the ancient proverb,—‘Spare the rod and spoil the child.’ Sanatan Sarkar, the village school-master of Birsingha, used to beat mercilessly the tender-aged boys under his care, and he was an object of terror to them. Isvar Chandra’s father, Thakurdas, disapproved of this harsh dealing, and he heartily disliked Sanatan. He was, therefore, in great anxiety with respect to his little boy’s education, and began to look out for a more humane teacher, who would use his rod less freely, and in whose hands he could safely place his little son.

His choice fell on a *Kulin* Brahman, by name Kalikanta Chattopadhyay, who had formerly been a native of Birsingha, but had subsequently removed to his father-in-law’s at Garuti, a small village close to Bhadresvar in the district of Hugli. This Kalikanta had many wives in different places, as was the custom with the *Kulin* Brahmans of those days. Thakurdas sent for him at his father-in-law’s, and on his arrival, set up another *pathsala* at Birsingha with Kalikanta as its teacher. Kalikanta, unlike his fellow-brother Sanatan, was a man of amiable disposition and considerable humanity. His treatment of his pupils was mild, decent and genial. He very seldom gave them corporal punishment. He tried, by gentle and soothing words, to rectify their mistakes, and to impart to them educational and moral lesson.

He secured the warmest love and esteem of his pupils, and sincere friendship and patronage of their guardians. Such was the village school-master, who was introduced into Birsingha, and into the hands of this worthy teacher; was Isvar Chandra placed by his father, at the early age of five years.

The boy, Isvar Chandra, had uncommon parts, which began to develop early in this elementary school. He finished the course of study taught in this kind of school in three year's time, and at this early age of eight, he wrote a very good hand. Good handwriting had a very high place at that time, and was taken to be the best recommendation, a bride could have. The teacher, Kalikanta, was greatly surprised at the degree of intelligence and memory displayed by young Isvar Chandra, and he was often heard to say that this boy would become a great man in his after-life.

After he had been one year with Kalikanta, Isvar Chandra was seriously ill with Enlargement Spleen and Dysentery. He had, therefore, to be removed to the house of his maternal uncle at village *Paṭul*, for treatment. His younger brother, Dinabandhu, accompanied him. Here he was placed under the treatment of Ram Lochan *Kaviraj*, a native physician of Kothra, which is a village close to Khanakul Krishnanagar in the Hugli district. Under the treatment of this able physician, he was soon cured perfectly. When he regained strength enough to be able to undertake a journey, he came

to his native village, Birsingha, and he was again placed under the tuition of the worthy teacher, Kalikanta, who loved his young pupil, Isvar Chandra, exceedingly. In the evening, after he had dismissed his school, Kalikanta used daily to give him separate lessons in native Arithmetic, Mensuration, and other subjects, which formed the curriculum of study in elementary vernacular schools of those days, and then, when the lessons were over, he used to carry the boy to his home. For this reason Isvar Chandra adored him ever after.

In his early years, Isvar Chandra was very naughty, and many stories are told of his childish waywardness and mischievous freaks. Surely enough, most boys are naughty and mischievous in their early years, but their naughtiness is never called to mind, nor does it ever appear in the pages of immortal history. But one feels a sort of curiosity to hear, with thrilling pleasure, the tales of mischievous freaks of those who, in after years, led a glorious life, and left a good name. Chaitanya, otherwise known as Gaurangā, the great Hindu reformer of *Vaishnaism*, while a young boy, used to steal and eat up fruit and other articles of divine worship offered by his compatriot Brahmans. Shakspeare, in his early days, associated himself with some other wicked boys, and stole deer. The famous poet Wordsworth, in his boyhood, exceedingly tortured his mother. It is said that, one day,

young Wordsworth, on looking at an old picture hanging from the walls, suddenly caught hold of his elder brother's arms, and requested him to lash the picture. His elder brother declining to comply with his inhuman request, he himself took up a whip, and with it lashed the picture several times. The reverend Doctor Peli was very naughty in his early years. He was a terror to his neighbours, who could not rest peacefully at night, for his depredations. Robert (afterwards *Lord*) Clive, the founder of the British empire in India, while only a little boy, used to ascend on the steeple of a very high church, and sit there composedly. Instances of such childish naughtiness on the part of men, who in after-life attained superiority and greatness, tend in a great measure to excite curious pleasurable feelings. The early part of the lives of many of these great men is conspicuously marked by freaks of childish naughtiness.

During his latter days, on one occasion, a gentleman paid Vidyasagar a friendly visit, accompanied with his young boy. Vidyasagar remarked that the boy would become a great man, at which the visitor smiled, saying that the boy was very naughty. Vidyasagar retorted as follows :--'Never mind, my friend, I too was very naughty in early days. I used to steal fruits from the orchards of my neighbours, and defile with soil other people's clothes left to dry in the sun. I was an object of terror to my neighbours.'

Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar was often heard to frankly admit his childish naughtiness. One Mathur Mandal was his near neighbour. Almost every day, on his way to or from school, he eased himself in front of Mathur Mandal's outer gates. Mathur's mother and wife removed the soil with their own hands. Mathur's wife, now and then lost her temper, and wanted to punish the culprit, but her mother-in-law prevented her, saying that she had heard from the boy's grand-father that he would become a great man. Whenever he passed by a rice or other corn field, of which there are plenty in Bengal, he used to tear away the ears of the newly-ripe corn and trample them under foot, or scatter them to the winds, thus causing a great mischief to his neighbours. Now and then he chewed and devoured a few of the unhusked grains. On one of these occasions, the awn of a barley stuck into his throat, and he was in danger of his life. His grandmother drew it out with great dexterity, and thus saved the boy from imminent death. This wicked boy, in after-life, became a most inoffensive, humble, peaceful, pious man. In fact, such was the case with many men, who though very naughty in their early years, turned afterwards to be good and great men.

CHAPTER III.

ADVENT TO CALCUTTA.

One day, after Isvar Chandra had finished his preliminary education in the primary school of his native village, his teacher, Kalikanta, came to his father, Thakurdas, and said :—"This boy is very intelligent. He has finished his curriculum here. You should now take him to Calcutta, and placed him in a good English school there so that he might receive proper English education. Thakurdas agreed, and resolved to take the boy to Calcutta. But their departure had to be deferred for a few days, owing to the death of Isvar Chandra's grandfather, Ramjay Tarkasiddhanta, who had been suffering for some time from dysentery. After the funeral and *Sradha* ceremonies (last rites in honour and memory of the dead in accordance with the Hindu *Sastras*) had been over, Thakurdas, accompanied with his little son, Isvar Chandra, started for Calcutta, one day in the month of November, 1829. Isvar Chandra's beloved teacher Kalikanta, and Anandaram Gutti, a menial servant, were their sole companions. Isvar Chandra's affectionate mother, Bhagavati Devi, began to cry bitterly and loudly when she heard that her dear little boy of eight years was going to Calcutta where he would have to put up with many troubles.

The journey, at that time, from Birsingha to Calcutta was very difficult and tedious. There was no railway or anything of the kind. In fact, there was no good road, properly so called. The communication between the two places by water also was not very easy. The new Uluberia canal was not then dug, and it was not considered safe to pass the rivers by boat. There was the fear of storms, which rose quite suddenly, over and above the dread of pirates, who were always in search of prey, and plundered and killed the passengers whenever opportunity presented itself. Boats belonging to traders and merchants journeyed on in company during day-light, and took shelter before dusk at some convenient, safe harbour. Ordinary passengers dared not travel by the rivers.

These considerations led Thakurdas to prefer the land route. So he, followed by his son, the village schoolmaster, and the servant, started for Calcutta on foot. At the end of the first day's journey, they came to the house of the maternal uncle of Isvar Chandra's mother in the village of Patul, and there lodged for that day. The next day, they travelled twenty miles, and, about sunset, arrived at the residence of a gentleman, who was nearly related to Thakurdas, and here they rested for the night. The third day, they were on the metalled road from Sheakhala to Salkea, which is a village opposite to Calcutta, divided from it only by the river Hugli.

The extraordinary intellect and memory, with which Isvar Chandra was gifted, and which raised him to such eminence, showed themselves in the little boy on this Salkea road. Here was visible the sprout which subsequently grew into a big tree, with spreading branches bearing nice fruit and sweet-smelling flowers, under which many a wearied traveller found shelter, and ate of the fruit, and smelt of the flowers. There were mile-stones on the road, and the boy, Isvar Chandra, with childish inquisitiveness, enquired of his father what these stones were for. His father smiled at the simplicity of the boy, and replied that these were called *mile-stones*; explaining, at the same time, that they were placed at intervals of a distance of mile, which was nearly equalled to half a Bengali *krosh*, to indicate the length of the road. The boy learned the English figures (1 to 10) from the numbers engraved on the mile-stones. Presently, a little farther on the road, a milestone was not shown to the boy purposely, in order to test the boy's knowledge. When they came to the next mile-stone, Isvar Chandra remarked that they had omitted to notice a mile-stone, upon which his teacher, Kalikanta, said that the omission was intentional and made on purpose to see whether he (Isvar Chandra) had been able to learn the English figures.

They walked the whole day, and, at about sun-set, reached Salkea. Here they crossed the

river Hugli, and arrived at Barabazar, Calcutta, where they repaired to the house of Babu Jagaddurlabh Singha, son of Babu Bhagavat Charan Singha, who had formerly given shelter to Isvar Chandra's father, Thakurdas. Bhagavat Charan had died sometime before this. Jagaddurlabh Babu was, at this time, only twenty-five years old. He knew Thakurdas from his early years, and revered him as his own father. His mother, who was the mistress of the house, an elder sister and her husband and two sons, a widowed sister and her only son;—these were the sole members of Jagaddurlabh Babu's family.

The boy, Isvar Chandra, was a great favourite with every one of the members of this household. He surprised them all by his wonderful memory. On the second day of their arrival at Calcutta, his father, Thakurdas, was engaged in adding up the amounts of several bills written in English, belonging to Jagaddurlabh Babu. Isvar Chandra was sitting close to his father, and looking at the bills. Presently, he whispered in his father's ears that he could, if permitted, sum up the figures. With this, he began to add the figures, and in a few minutes summed up the amounts of the several bills correctly, without a single mistake. Every one present was amazed at the marvellous parts of the little boy. His teacher, Kalikanta, who was sitting by him, was exceedingly delighted, and, having affectionately kissed him, said;—

"Well done, my dear boy, may God give you a long life. The love I bestowed on you has not been in vain." The reader may laugh at the story with incredulity; but this is not very incredible. When we study the lives of great men, we find many instances of extraordinary power in every one of them. All talented men, endowed with extraordinary powers of the mind, are known to have given clear indications, in their early years, of their future greatness. The germs of their future eminence put forth their sprouts at an early age, and indicated the place they were to occupy in their after-life. Milton used to say :—"The child shows the man, as morning shows the day."

It is said of the famous Bengali poet, Isvar Chandra Gupta, that when he first came to Calcutta he was only seven or eight years old. Shortly after his arrival, one of his father's acquaintances asked him, one day, how he was faring in Calcutta. The future poet, at once replied in verse, that he was living in Calcutta with mosquitoes in the night and flies in the day.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the best novel-writer of Bengal, is said to have learnt the Bengali alphabet in one day.

Johnson was known to be the possessor of many qualities. He had a superior memory.* One day, when he was only a little boy, and had only begun to read and write, his mother asked him to learn a prayer-book by heart, and leaving the boy

with the task, went upstairs. The little boy ran after his mother, and scarcely had she reached her room, when Johnson appeared before her and repeated the prayer-book from the beginning to the end, without missing a single syllable. His mother was quite surprised and delighted at the marvellous memory of her little son. To tell the truth, he read the book only twice and learnt it all.

The famous poet, Pope, wrote his "Ode on Solitude" when he was only twelve years old. He used to compose verses at a still earlier age, but his father did not approve of this. He told Pope not to waste his time in writing poems, but the boy would not hear him, and when his father, one day, gave him a severe beating, he cried out in verse :—

"Papa, papa, pity take,
I will no more verses make."

Milton composed verses at a very early age, and the famous writers of the time were amazed at the beauty of his poems. Such instances are not rare.

Everyone admired the extraordinary powers of the little boy Isvar Chandra, and earnestly requested his father to place him in a good English school. Thakurdas was highly delighted at the praise bestowed on his son, and expressed his desire that he would send him to the Hindu College. Those present suggested that he could not

aspire to that, as he was getting a pay of only ten rupees a month, out of which he would have to pay a school-fee of five rupees every month, if he sent his son to the Hindu College. Thakurdas replied that he would somehow or other manage to defray his household expenses at five rupees. Thakurdas's mind was then full of aspirations, and was animated with the ardour of giving his son a decent education. He called to mind his little son's extraordinary talents, and, encouraged with the prospects of Isvar Chandra's future greatness, wholly lost sight of his pecuniary difficulties.

Although he had resolved to send his son immediately to the Hindu College, Thakurdas could not carry out the project for three succeeding months. These three months Isvar Chandra devoted in obtaining a little more preliminary instruction in a neighbouring vernacular *pathsala* under the tuition of a veteran teacher, Svarup Chandra Das, of whom Vidyasagar thus speaks in his autobiography :—‘The teacher of the *pathsala*, Svarup Chandra Das was perhaps more skillful in the art of teaching than my former teacher, Kalikanta’.

Isvar Chandra must have considered himself very fortunate in finding shelter with Babu Jagad-durlabh Singha, whose kindness of heart was equal to his means. Not only did he give the boy and his father shelter, but he provided them also with food and clothing, and treated them most kindly and affectionately. The female members of his

household were equally kind and lovely. Jagaddurlabh Babu's younger sister. Raimani, loved the boy, Isvar Chandra, dearer than her own son. In his autobiography Vidyasagar thus describes her :—'I have never seen a woman equal to Raimani in kindness, affection, amiability, loveliness, and openness of heart. The image of this noble woman has been indelibly engraved in my mind. She was a goddess to me, I adored her as my mother. Even at this old age I cannot help shedding grateful tears at the recollection of her amiable appearance and noble qualities, whenever her name is mentioned in passing.'

In fact, without the affectionate kindness of this motherly, noble woman, it would have been very difficult for young Isvar Chandra to live in Calcutta. For a few days after his arrival at Calcutta, he was much pained at the recollection of his affectionate mother and grandmother. His father could not always remain with him. Thakur-das used to go out daily to his place of employment at nine O'clock in the morning and came back in the evening at the same hour. He was thus absent from his son continuously for twelve long hours. All this time, Raimani and the other inmates of Jagaddurlabh Babu's house, tried their best to divert his mind by kind and gentle words. They gave him food and drink whenever the boy required, and comforted him. In this way they won over Isvar Chandra's heart.

In India many such poor boys have found shelter with kind-hearted noblemen, who have taken great care to bring up and train these helpless boys. Some of these poor boys are known to have become great men and to have left an everlasting name. Who is there in Bengal who has not heard the name of Ramdulal Sarkar, the then great millionaire of Calcutta ? And what was he in his early years ? He was only a poor, helpless urchin, wandering in the streets of the large city, with no one to care for him. But how did he then succeed in amassing such immense wealth, and rising to such eminence ? He found shelter with the benevolent Dattas of Hatkhola, a highly noble family in Calcutta, who not only fed and clothed him, but also brought him up as became the son of a gentleman. He was then provided by them with a suitable employment, and, gradually, by dint of his honesty, truthfulness, and business-capacity, he soon became one of the foremost and wealthiest native merchants of Calcutta. When we think of the utter destitute and helpless state of the poor boy, Ramdulal, and the kind and generous treatment he received from the Dattas, we forget that the world, we live in, is wicked. On the contrary, it appears to be a heaven, and its inmates, angels.

After Isvar Chandra had been three months in Calcutta, he had a sudden attack of acute dysentery of a very severe type. The stools were too

frequent and bloody. His father, Thakurdas, nursed him, and removed the soil with his own hands. He was placed under the treatment of Durgadas Kaviraj, a neighbouring native physician of great repute. But the foul disease grew more serious every day, and, at last, his life was despaired of. No sooner did the news of his illness reach Birsingha, than his old grandmother hurried to Calcutta, and was soon by the bedside of her dear, little grandson. She nursed him tenderly for a few days, but when she saw that the disease was growing worse every day, she took him away to his native village, Birsingha, where he soon recovered even without any medical help.

To regain his former health, Isvar Chandra had to stay at his home for three months. By the end of May he returned to Calcutta in company with his father, who had gone home to bring him back. They resolved to travel by land as before. On the former occasion, they were accompanied by a menial servant, Ananda Ram Guti, who, at intervals, bore the boy Isvar Chandra on his shoulders. Thakurdas now asked Isvar Chandra whether he would be able to walk such a long distance, or Ananda Ram should accompany them, to which the boy replied with great enthusiasm that he would be able to walk, and that Ananda Ram would be an unnecessary accompaniment. Isvar Chandra was fearless and enthusiastic from his very childhood.

Both father and son started on foot, and after walking a distance of more than twelve miles, came to village Patul, where they lodged for that day. This first day Isvar Chandra felt no difficulty. The next morning, they started for Ramnagar, a village twelve miles off from Patul. Annapurna, a younger sister of Thakurdas's, had been married to a respectable Brahman of Ramnagar, At the time, of which we are speaking, she was living with her husband, but was ill. Thakurdas and Isvar Chandra were going to Ramnagar to see her, on their way to Calcutta. When they had walked only six miles from Patul, Isvar Chandra was quite disabled to move farther, His legs and feet were swollen and painful. It was a hot and sultry day of Indian May, and the sun was then in its zenith. Thakurdas was in great peril, What was he to do now ? How was he to help his son on ? The path was lonely. There was no conveyance available. Thakurdas showed the boy a yonder field of melons, saying that he would feed him with a belly-ful of melons, if he would only walk to the field. Thus encouraged, Isvar Chandra limped slowly towards the field, which he reached with great difficulty. He ate melons there, and appeased his appetite, but his feet became more painful and refused their office. Thakurdas was now exceedingly annoyed. In great vexation he left Isvar Chandra on the spot, and walked on, at which the little boy

began to cry. Thakurdas came back to his son, and took him up on his shoulders, but he was a feeble man himself and quite unable to carry a stout lad of eight years. He then set down the boy on the ground, and began to upbraid him for not allowing Ananda Ram to bear them company. The father, who had never before laid hands on Isvar Chandra, now smote him in the face. Isvar Chandra renewed his cries more loudly. But all this would not do. Anyhow the boy must be borne, or he would die on the road. The father again took up the child, and moved slowly on. In this way he carried the boy with utmost difficulty, and, at about sun-set, arrived at Ramnagar. Here they rested for that night and the next day. On the fourth day they came to Baidyabati, and from thence by boat to Calcutta.

Now was the time to send young Isvar Chandra to school. This time Thakurdas thought of giving him Sanskrit education. His idea was that if Isvar Chandra learnt Sanskrit well, he would be able to open a *tal* (Sanskrit school) and set up as a Sanskrit professor. Madhusudan Vachaspati, a not very distant relation of Isvar Chandra's was then a student of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta. This Madhusudan was cousin to Radha Mohan Vidyabhushan, who was maternal uncle to Isvar Chandra's mother. Madhusudan advised Thakurdas to send his son to the Sanskrit

College, where the system of imparting instruction was more perfect. Besides, he said, there were plenty of paths open for the successful students of this school. There were good prospects even for him, who would aspire to a respectable situation. The post of *Judge-Pandit* (legal adviser to a District civil Judge on Hindu law) was reserved for those brilliant scholars who, after passing the course of training in the other branches of the Sanskrit Literature, also passed the Law-Committee examination.

Madhu Sudan delivered this advice in a most impressive manner, and Thakurdas, convinced of its propriety, approved of it. Pandit Gangadhar Tarkavagis was, at that time, one of the professors of Grammar in the Sanskrit College. Thakurdas consulted also the learned professor on the subject, and the latter was of the same opinion as Madhu Sudan. Ultimately, it was definitely settled that Isvar Chandra should be placed in the Sanskrit College.

CHAPTER IV.

ADMISSION INTO THE SANSKRIT COLLEGE.

Isvar Chandra was admitted into the the Sanskrit College on the first day of June, 1829. The chief aim of the College till then, and some time

after, since its establishment, was to diffuse Sanskrit education. English was not then compulsory. It was optional. Very few boys took up English as a second language, and it was taught only meagrely. From this, it seems that the authorities had Sanskrit most at heart and that their object was to impart Sanskrit education to the exclusion of English. Whatever their object might be, practically English was excluded from the curriculum of the College.

The mode of imparting instruction, too, adopted in this seminary, at that time, was wholly indigenous. There were no benches for the pupils, no chairs for the teachers. Only Brahman and other *Dvija* (twice-born) boys were allowed to enter the College. The pupils had to sit on mats spread upon the floor, and their teachers sat opposite to them, reclining on heavy pillows, as is the practice in *tols*.

The Sanskrit College of Calcutta was established in the year 1824. At the time of its foundation, Raja Ram Mohan Ray, the founder of the modern Brahma faith, and the first Hindu native of Bengal, who dared leave the shores of India and cross the ocean, and who has immortalised himself in the pages of history as the first Hindu native of India, who raised his hand against the practice, then obtaining in this country, of burning living *Satis* in the funeral pyres of their dead husbands, and some other influential men of the time, who had got English education and imbibed

Western notions and civilisation, raised many objections in its way. Their chief contentions were that what the country needed, was not a separate Sanskrit College, but an English College on a sound basis for instruction of European Arts and Sciences, in as much as there were a good many *tols* in Bengal, where Sanskrit was well taught. On the other hand, the other party argued that there was already the Hindu College for English instruction, that there was no good institution for Sanskrit education, and that the Hindus were in urgent need of such a seminary as would teach Sanskrit in all its branches more systematically. Raja Ram Mohan was deeply disappointed at the failure of his attempts *

The Hindu College, of which mention has been made before, was seven years older than the Sanskrit College. No doubt, the students of the Hindu College learnt English well, and gained a good knowledge of the Arts and Sciences of Europe, but they had one great failing. They saw that the English were a most powerful and civilised nation, and were masters of the soil. Their idea, therefore,

*Ram Mohan Ray, the ablest representative of the more advanced members of the Hindu community, expressed deep disappointment on the part of himself and his countrymen at the resolution of Government to establish a new Sanskrit College, instead of a seminary to impart instruction in the Arts, Sciences and Philosophy of Europe.

Report of Indian Education Commission, 1882.

was that whatever the English did, was good. Most surely, the English possess many good qualities, but they are men, and have their faults too. In their endeavours to imitate the English and other Europeans, the students of the Hindu College failed to imbibe any of their good qualities, but merely copied their frailties and evil practices. They forsook their national customs, and took to European manners in many respect. They cast aside *Dhuti* and *Chadar*, their national dress, and dressed themselves in trousers and coats. They even took pride in drinking wine and spirits, and in eating beef, the restricted food of the Hindus. They considered their fathers no better than barbarians, and treated them accordingly. They were thus an eyesore to the orthodox Hindu community, who were deeply pained at this state of things, and yearned for a school, where Hindu boys might obtain a decent education, without losing their nationality. Thus originated the Sanskrit College, and, perhaps, this was one of the reasons, which led the orthodox Hindu, Thakurdas, to alter his mind, and forego his former design of sending his son, Isvar Chandra, to the Hindu College.

Isvar Chandra was admitted to the third form of the Vyakaran (Grammar) class of the Sanskrit College. Sanskrit grammar is the door to Sanskrit knowledge. Without a perfect mastery of this subject, one can have no sound knowledge of the Sanskrit literature. It is, therefore, that a

student of this ancient tongue has first of all to apply himself to the study of Grammar. There are many books on the subject, of which *Mugdha-bodha*, *Kulap*, *Sankshiptasar*, and *Panini* stand foremost, and a student of Sanskrit must take up any one of these. *Sankshiptasar* was selected for Isvar Chandra, because his father, Thakurdas, had some knowledge of the book, as he had read a great part of it in his early years, and, he thought, he would thus be able to give some help to his son in his home study. Isvar Chandra had to repeat, every night, to his father what he had learnt of Grammar in his college-class in the day. As we have said before, Pandit Gangadhar Tarkavagis of Kumarhatta was one of the professors of Grammar in the Sanskrit College, and Isvar Chandra was placed in his hands. We give below, in passing, a full list of the learned professors, then engaged on the instructive staff of the College. *Grammar*—Gangadhar Tarkavagis, Hari Prasad Tarkalankar, and Haranath Tarkabhushan. *Rhetoric*—Nathu Ram Sastri ; *Smriti* (Hindu law) Ram Chandra Vidyavagis ; *Philosophy*—Nimchand Siromani ; *Vedanta*—(Theology) Sambhu Chandra Vachaspati ; *Belles-lettres*—Jay Gopal Tarkalankar ; *Astronomy*—Yogadhyan Misra ; *Ayurved* (Hindu medicine)—Kshudiram Viśarad. These were the best Sanskrit scholars of the time, and were selected by Professor Wilson for the Sanskrit College, at the time of its foundation.

Gangadhar Tarkavagis was exceedingly pleased at the uncommon intelligence displayed by young Isvar Chandra, and loved his little pupil dearly. In addition to the usual daily lessons in grammar, the professor used to teach him, every day, some *Udbhat Slokas* (extempore verses composed at different times by different bards), of which there are an infinite number in the Sanskrit language.

To attend his school, Isvar Chandra had to walk from Barabazar, the residence of Jagaddurlabh Babu, where he was putting up, to Pataldanga, where the Sanskrit College was located, a distance of over two miles. For the first six months, his father, Thakurdas, used daily to accompany him to school at nine o'clock in the morning, and again bring him back at four in the evening, for fear lest the little boy should miss his way. This had also the effect of preventing him from mixing with bad boys, who loitered on their way, or wasted time in seeing sights, or doing mischievous deeds of different kinds. At the end of the six months, he won a scholarship of five rupees a month. When he was familiar with the roads he had to pass, and had a sufficient knowledge of the boys he was to keep from, he was left to walk to the College by himself.

In his early years, Isvar Chandra was a dwarf, that is to say, he was not tall to his age. His stature was diminutive, but his head was larger in proportion to the other limbs. His school-fellows, therefore, humorously gave him the nickname of

Jasure Kai (i. e. the *Kai* fish of Jessore) *, at which Isvar Chandra used to be greatly annoyed. The boys were much amused at his futile rage. Sometimes, by a wilful misplacement of the sounds *J* and *K*, they called him *Kasure Jai*, instead of *Jasure Kai*, and then he was provoked to the extreme. But he could not give utterance to a single syllable, as he was a great stammerer, at that time. Had the boys been able to foresee that this little large-headed dwarf, whom they thus nicknamed jocosely, would become such a great man in after years, they would never have ventured to tease and annoy him in this fashion.

Thakurdas was a man of rigour and irritable temperament. It has been mentioned before, that what Isvar Chandra read in his class in the day, he had to repeat, every night, to his father. If he ever missed a single word or syllable, he had to receive a good thrashing from the hands of Thakurdas. Even at this young age he had to sit up a great part of the night. His father returned home from his place of business at nine o'clock in the

* A great number of live *Kai* fish are imported to Calcutta from the Jessore District, in boats. Since they are fished up, these fishes get nothing to eat, and consequently they decay in flesh, but their heads remain much the same ; and when they are produced for sale in the Calcutta bazars, their big heads appear prominently. Hence the nickname *Jasure Kai* is given to one, whose head is much bigger in porportion to the other parts.

evening, and after that, he cooked food for himself and his son. All this time Isvar Chandra had to read his lessons, or repeat them to his father. If accidentally he fell asleep, either from exhaustion, or any other cause, his father was sure to thrash him. The beating was sometimes so severe, that the other inmates of the house were aroused by the loud, pitiful cries of the little boy, when the kind Raimani, Jagaddurlabh Babu's sister, mentioned above, hastened from her inner apartments, and saved Isvar Chandra from further chastisement. It is said that, on one occasion, Thakurdas beat his son so severely with a huge fire-wood, that lay close by, that Isvar Chandra fled from the house, and took shelter with Babu Ramdhan Ganguli, the then clerk of the Sanskrit College. Ramdhan Babu comforted the boy by kind and gentle words, and after feeding him, took him to his father. When the tale of this incident reached Jagaddurlabh Babu's ears, he was very sorry and displeased with Thakurdas. He remonstrated with Isvar Chandra's father on the impropriety of his conduct, and even threatened to remove him from his house, if he continued to beat the little boy so heavily. This had the desired chastening effect on the father, who henceforth lessened the severity of his treatment towards the boy. Isvar Chandra, too, grew every day more careful. He took great care to keep himself awake till his father slept. For this purpose, he poured into his eyes mustard-oil, which caused

them a great irritation, and prevented them from closing their lids.

Isvar Chandra studied in the Grammar department for three years. In the first two years, he stood first at the annual examinations, and won prizes. But, in the third year, he neither topped the list, nor secured any prizes. Isvar Chandra was so much disappointed and dejected at this, that he even thought of quitting the College and prosecuting his studies in a *Tol*. No wonder. Every one knew that he was the best boy in the class, and toiled hard, day and night, for the examination. What was then the cause of his failure? Some say, that Mr. Price, a European, was appointed examiner of Grammar for that year. The examination was conducted orally. Whatever questions were put to Isvar Chandra, he took time to weigh them carefully in his mind, and then made answers slowly, but correctly, without committing a single blunder. But this was a fault in the eyes of Mr. Price, or he himself was unable to grasp the full meaning of what Isvar Chandra said. Whatever that might be, the examiner gave more marks to those boys, who answered the questions with readiness and promptness, though their answers were defective or wrong.

After much persuasion, Isvar Chandra was induced to come back to the College. The next six months he devoted to the study of *Amarkosh* (a Sanskrit Dictionary, which every student of Sans-

krit must learn by heart, before he begins the Belles-lettres). At this time, Isvar Chandra's waywardness and obstinateness showed themselves clearly. What is considered to be a fault in ordinary men, turns to good account in the case of those who are gifted with extraordinary talents. Such was the case with Isvar Chandra. He was zealous, enthusiastic, and obstinate. He chose to be guided by nobody but his own will. He did not care for what other people said or would say. Menaces and threats, or even punishment, could not move him a single step from his design. If his father told him to change his dirty clothes and put on clean ones, he would act quite the contrary. If his father told him to bathe, he would never do it. In short, if his father told him to go one way, Isvar Chandra was sure to take the other. Thakurdas was very much annoyed at this wilful waywardness of the boy, and beat him severely ; but Isvar Chandra would have his own way. Thakurdas then devised other means. He gave out in words directions quite contrary to what he really meant. If he wished that the boy should bathe, he directed him not to bathe, and Isvar Chandra would be sure to wash himself. If the father wished his son to change his dirty clothes, he told him not to change them, and Isvar Chandra at once put on a clean dress. But, at last, the boy found out the tricks played upon him by his father, and then he very carefully weighed the directions, and tried to discover what the father really wished,

determining always to go against his wishes. This stubbornness of mind, which formed a principal element of his character, ripening with age, was productive of many noble deeds, for which Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar's name will be ever remembered with grateful reverence.

The stubbornness of Isvar Chandra reminds us of the stubbornness of Johnson in his early years. It is said of Johnson that in his childhood, a servant used daily to accompany him to and from school. One day, the servant was a little too late, and Johnson walked out of the school by himself. The governess being apprised of this, ran after the child, for fear lest he should miss his way and fall into some trouble. When Johnson found, that he was followed by the governess, his pride was touched, that she must have been doubtful of his powers. He was so much provoked at what he considered to be a deliberate affront on the part of the governess, that he retraced his steps, came back to school, and struck her. This stubbornness was very conspicuous in Johnson's after-life.

When Isvar Chandra entered the Belles-lettres class, he was only eleven years old.* Besides, he was not sufficiently tall for his age. The teacher of this class, Jay Gopal Tarkalankar objected to take him into his class, and stated that

* Madan Mohan Tarkalankar and Muktaram Vidyavagis (both of whom turned reputed authors in after-life) were among his class-fellows.

so little a boy would not be able to comprehend the meaning of the Sanskrit poems. The pride of Isvar Chandra was touched. He requested the teacher to examine him on the subject, and then to take him if he was considered fit, as otherwise he must leave the College. Jay Gopal Tarkalankar gave him a few *Slokas* (stanzas) from *Bhatti* (a very difficult poem) to explain, which the boy paraphrased and explained very creditably. There could now be no objection to take the little boy. He was accordingly admitted into this class.

We have forgotten to mention, that in the second year of his Grammar class, Isvar Chandra had also enrolled himself as a student of English. We have already noticed briefly what the state of English instruction was, at that time, in the Sanskrit College. Very few students applied to it with due diligence. Isvar Chandra read in the English class for only six months, and then gave it over. But Isvar Chandra repented of it in after years, and he had to toil hard to obtain a little knowledge of the English language.

Now, let us see how he fared in the Belles-lettres department. In the first year, he studied *Raghuvangsa*, *Kumar-sambhava* and *Raghava-Pandaviya*. At the annual examination of this class, he headed the list of successful students, and won the first prize. In the second year, he read *Magha*, *Bharavi*, *Sakuntala*, *Meghduta*, *Uttaracharita*, *Vikramorvasi*, *Kadambari*, *Dasakumarchrita*,

Mudrarakshasa, and other poetical and dramatical works. At the annual examination of this class, he stood first and won the best prizes. Most of these works, both poetical and dramatical, he had learnt by heart and could repeat with wonderful accuracy. He was best at *Translation*. Even at this early age of twelve, he could speak Sanskrit and Prakṛita correctly and fluently. Not only his teachers and class-fellows, but all the pundits of the time were amazed at the wonderful powers of the intelligent, little boy. Was not Isvar Chandra talented ?

We have already stated that from his childhood, Isvar Chandra wrote a very good hand. He was one of the best writers in the College. Every year, he won prizes for good hand-writing. Everybody admired his penmanship. He copied, with his own hand, many Sanskrit books for himself, and the penmanship of these books, even to the present day, appears as if it were a fine wool-work executed by some skilful hand. Very few literary men have been able to win such universal praise in all respects.

We now come to that part of little Isvar Chandra's life, where he had to struggle hard to be able to keep pace with, nay to excel, his College rivals. The adverse circumstances, under which he had to carry his point would, no doubt, damp the spirit of ordinary people, and make them forego their design. But Isvar Chandra was far above the ordinary rank,

He had an uncommon strength of mind and fixedness of purpose. He had many obstacles in his way, but he overcame them with manly spirit and easy alacrity. The difficulties and troubles rather served to encourage him the more. He has shown to the world that poverty is no hindrance to the attainment of an object. He has left an unparalleled example of noble heroism for the poverty-stricken. With such a precedent before one's eyes, one cannot lose heart, even under most adverse circumstances.

When Isvar Chandra was reading in the second year class of the Belles-lettres department, his younger brother, Dina Bandhu,* came to Calcutta to prosecute his studies in the Sanskrit College.

Now there were thus three members† of Thakur-das's family in Calcutta, for him to maintain with his slender means, besides those that were living in Birsingha. We have already said, that Thakur-das had a very limited income. It was not, therefore, possible for him to retain a domestic or cook. Poor Isvar Chandra had to do everything. He did all the marketing and cooking. Coal had not then come into use in Calcutta for purposes of cooking, which was done by fire-wood. Little Isvar

* Subsequently he won the title of Nyayratna and became Deputy Inspector of schools.

† Later on, his third brother, Sambhu Chandra, having joined them for the purpose of carrying on his studies, the number of members rose to four.

Chandra chopped the fuel-wood with his own hands. He cooked food, and distributed it to his father and brother. He did all the cleaning. In short, Isvar Chandra was both a domestic and a cook. He did not feel tired with all these daily household works, but rather performed them with his usual cheerfulness. He felt a sort of inward pride and exultation at being able to show to the world, that he was above the ordinary rank and could beat down his compeers in every respect, even under such discouraging circumstances. But the question now is, how could he make time for his studies? After all, Isvar Chandra was a man, and to learn, he must read. Mere talents would not do. Isvar Chandra was not only talented, but also industrious to the extreme. He was very assiduous, and toiled hard at his lessons, and being possessed of a retentive memory, could easily make up for lost time. He never wasted a minute. He read his books even while he was engaged in cooking. In the night, he slept only two hours. After performing the usual household duties and feeding his father and brother, he used to go to bed at 10 P. M., requesting his father, who sat up on business till 12 P. M., to arouse him (Isvar Chandra) at that hour. He read from mid-night to day-break, when he had to put aside his books, to apply himself again to the domestic duties. It is also said, that on his way to and from College, he used to read his books and ponder over his lessons.

Nor did Isvar Chandra's troubles end here. He had patiently to put up with difficulties most trying and painful. The readers of the present day can have no idea of the city of Calcutta of those days. The conservancy was most defective, particularly in the native quarters. The uncovered drains on two sides of the lanes were full of dirt and foul water, appearing like cess-pools, with worms of various descriptions rolling about in their midst, and mosquitoes filling the air with their peculiar songs. The houses standing in rows by the sides of these drains, shut out the sun throughout the year, and they were therefore always damp, especially their lowest floors. The privies and cook-rooms for the tenants of the lowest floors were, for want of space, located side by side. Cock-roaches and other insects and worms abounded in them; The very sight of them was loathsome.

The lowest floor of Jagaddurlabh Babu's house, where Thakurdas lived with his sons, was not an exception to this. It was as filthy, as damp. The air in it was filled with a most offensive smell. The worms and cock-roaches from the neighbouring privies moved about freely in Isvar Chandra's cook-room. To keep the worms away, he kept a jug of water ready at hand, and whenever they approached him, he poured down some water upon them, making them recede with the water. But it was not so easy to keep back the cock-roaches. These were particularly troublesome in the night.



On one occasion, it so happened that when Isvar Chandra was eating his supper in company with his father and brothers, but upon different seats on the floor, as is the custom with the Hindus of Bengal, he discovered a dead cock-roach in one of his prepared dishes. Most probably, the insect had flown into the dish, while it was in the process of being cooked, and died there. What was Isvar Chandra to do now ? He foresaw, that if his father and brothers should see the loathsome insect, or hear of its existence in the dish, they would certainly give up eating, and throw their meals away. Clever Isvar Chandra, therefore, very carefully and dexterously took the insect out, and, at great risk, devoured it whole, along with a mouthful of rice. His father and brothers, quite unconscious of the matter, ate their meals as usual. After the meal was over, Isvar Chandra related the story, and every body, who heard it, was amazed at the little boy's wonderful forbearance and presence of mind.

The manner of Isvar Chandra's sleeping was not less difficult. The room in Jagaddurlabh Babu's house, where Thakurdas lodged with his sons, had a veranda attached to it, three feet in length by two feet in breadth. Isvar Chandra used to sleep in this veranda upon a mat of the same size, procured by him for the purpose. Later on, when his third brother, Sambhu Chandra, came to Calcutta to prosecute his studies, Isvar Chandra obtained permission to sleep in one of the lowest floor

rooms of a neighbouring gentleman, by name Tilak Chandra Ghosh. His brother, Sambhu Chandra, slept in the same bed with him, but being much younger, he was usually permitted to go to bed, immediately after the night-meal. One night, Sambhu Chandra having a little ailment of his bowels, eased himself on the bed and lay there sleeping, without apprising anybody of it. Later in the night, Isvar Chandra, quite unconscious of his brother's indisposition, lay down on the bed, and quite exhausted with hard labour, both physical and mental, fell fast asleep. When he awoke early in the morning, he found, to his utter astonishment and disgust, that his back and sides were besmeared with night-soil. He immediately removed the dirt with his own hands, and washed himself and the bedding. He did neither mention this to anybody, nor rebuke the offender, Sambhu Chandra. He was as much devoted to his brothers, as to his parents.

We have not yet noticed Isvar Chandra's clothing. India had not then been overflooded with foreign cloths turned out from machine-looms. Neither were there any weaving-machines, imported from the West, set up in the country. The native weavers used the hand-looms of their progenitors, and manufactured cloths of different kinds, both fine and coarse. There was a time, and that not long ago, when the fine muslin of Dacca, and the silk of Murshidabad and Rajsahi

found favour with the fashionable of the West, and were exported to a large extent, thereby greatly enriching the country. But, alas ! those days are gone, and the sons of the former weavers have parted with the looms of their forefathers, and taken to agriculture or other means of livelihood. Thakurdas's limited means would not permit him to give his sons fine dress. He could not afford to pay for any luxury. He was content to be able to provide them with coarse clothing. Isvar Chandra wore a coarse *Dhuti* * and a *Chadar* † of similar texture. He never grumbled at this. He was always averse to luxury. Even in later years, when he became a great and rich man, he never indulged in luxuries. A coarse *Dhuti* and *Chadar* and a pair of slippers constituted his complete dress. The simplicity of his dress and manners was derived from the habits, he had formed in his early years under poverty. With such a noble example before us, we cannot but admit that poverty does not necessarily generate meanness, as some people are apt to think, but, on the contrary, in not a few cases, it has been known to be the generator of many noble qualities. The victims of poverty are electrified, as it were, by their hardships, and are incited to work with zéal and

* A piece of long cloth worn about the loins.

† A piece of cloth wrapped round about the upper part of the body.

ardour. Their very privations tend to make them hard-working, painstaking, persevering, patient and ever-cheerful. Ritcher said :—"I cannot but choose to say to poverty,—'welcome, so thou come not too late in life.'"

Speaking of the great Spanish writer, Servantes, one man remarked that the world had been enriched by his poverty, meaning, that he had done an immense good to the world by his books.

Carlyle said :—"He who has battled, were it only with poverty and hard toil, will be found stronger and more expert than he, who would stay at home from the battle, concealed among the provision waggons, or even rest unwatchfully, abiding by the stuff."

Isvar Chandra bore his hardships with patience and cheerfulness. But even this would not save him from his rigorous father. The slightest accidental failing on his part was sure to bring down on his head his parent's wrath. He looked upon his father with the greatest awe and dread. It so happened, that Isvar Chandra had forgotten the *Sandhya-Mantras* (prayers to be told at different parts of the day). He merely feigned the *Sandhya* by making an apparent show of the outward formalities and gestures. When Thakurdas came to know, that his dear son, Isvar Chandra, was such a hypocrite, his rage knew no bounds, and he gave the little boy a sound thrashing. Isvar Chandra was then made to re-learn the *Mantras* on the spot.

which he did in a very short time. So sharp was his memory !

CHAPTER V.

MARRIAGE AND SUBSEQUENT STUDIES.

While still in the Belles-lettres class, little Isvar Chandra had acquired a great proficiency in grammar and language. He could at this early age, for he was then only thirteen years old, compose beautiful verses, elegant both in style and rhetoric. His *slokas* won admiration from all classes. On occasions of his visits to his native village, Birsingha, during College-vacations, he used to compose *Sraddha slokas* (invitation letters in Sanskrit verse). On one of these occasions, at the *Sraddha* of a rich man, Isvar Chandra was asked to compose an invitation *sloka* for the householder. The *sloka*, he composed, was so beautiful that the Brahman pundits from different parts of the country, assembled on invitation, admired the *sloka*, and wondered who the writer was. And when little Isvar Chandra, who was also present in the assembly, was pointed out as the author of the *sloka*, their wonder waxed hundred-fold. They blessed the lad with all their heart, and remarked, that the boy, in time, would be the best pundit, surpassed, nay equalled, by none.

Was not Isvar Chandra gifted with genius ? Milton was considered a genius, because at an



Dinamayi Devi, Vidyasagar's wife.

early age, he simply attempted at poetical composition in English, his mother language, and a language spoken in nearly every part of the world. * But young Isvar Chandra wrote elegant. poetry in a dead, classical language, spoken nowhere. Which of the two was greater, we leave the readers to decide.

The fame of Isvar Chandra's extraordinary talents, uncommon powers, and great proficiency in Sanskrit, soon spread throughout the length and breadth of the country, and many persons came forward with proposals of marriage, offering their daughters as brides to Isvar Chandra. At last, the marriage was definitely settled with a daughter of one Satrughna Bhattacharya, a well-to-do Brahman of Khirpai. It was at that time an important village. It was a great market of country-made cloth. Dealers in cloth from different parts of Bengal, nay from remote corners of western and north-western India, resorted to this mart. Satrughna Bhattacharya was one of the most respectable men of this large village. He considered Isvar Chandra the best bridegroom for his daughter, and he resolved on marrying her to him. Isvar Chandra was thus married, at the early age of fourteen, to Satrughna Bhattacharya's daughter,

* His first attempts at poetry were made as early as his thirteenth year, so that he is as striking an instance of precocity as of power of genius :—*Shaw's students of English Literature.*

Dinamayi Devi, a most beautiful girl of eight years. * Satrugna said to Thakurdas : - 'You see, Bandyopadhyay, I present my daughter to your son, not for the sake of your riches, for you are not a rich man, I know, but simply because your son, Isvar Chandra, has won a great reputation for his profound erudition. At first, Isvar Chandra had had no mind to enter into such an early marriage, but he had to yield to his father's requisition, for fear of his parent's great disappointment and displeasure. We have already said, that Isvar Chandra had always a great reverence for his father, and he now unhesitatingly submitted to his direction. Isvar Chandra must have considered himself fortunate in having Dinamayi for his wife. Without her aid, much of his future noble deeds might have remained undone. She was as noble-minded and generous, as she was kind and forgiving. To understand her character fully, the reader should be acquainted with her father.

Satrugna Bhattacharya was a robust Brahman of great strength, both of body and mind, and of irritable temper, but, at the same time, generous, liberal and forgiving. His co-villagers dreaded him for his uncommon prowess and strength, but

* According to the Hindu Sastras, eighth year is the best time for a girl to marry :—

“অষ্টবর্ষে ভবেদ্ গোঁরী নবমে চ রোহিণী ।

দশমে কঙ্কণ প্রোক্তা অত উর্দ্ধং ব্রজম্বলা ॥”

he won their hearts by his benevolence and generosity. Many stories are told of his extraordinary strength and valour displayed with magnanimity.

At the time, of which we are speaking, the *Gajan* * festival was performed annually with great pomp, in Khirpai. The Gajan procession used to circumambulate the whole village. Satrughna Bhattacharya was the leader of the processionists, and accompanied them all through. Unfortunately, on one occasion, the people of one part of the village rose against Satrughna, and were determined not to allow the processionists to enter their quarter. Satrughna was apprised of their conspiracy, and the intrepid Brahman was firmly resolved, that in spite of all obstacles, the procession must be proceeded with. As he led the procession towards that part of the village where his opponents lay in wait, he found that the enemy had stationed a huge elephant as front guard, followed by a large car, behind which the men of the other party were stationed in large numbers. Satrughna saw, in a moment, that this was the arrangement the enemy had made to hinder his progress. Not daunted in the least, he picked up a brick-bat, and seizing the elephant by its trunk, began striking it with all his force with the brick-bat. The huge beast, unable to bear the pain, roared aloud and made good

* Gajan, otherwise known as *Charak* is an annual Hindu festival, held in the month of April, in honour of the god Siva.

its escape. Satrughna then caught hold of the car, and, with a sudden jerk, overturned it, and threw it aside, thus clearing the way for the procession. The enemy, daunted at the sight of his prowess, dispersed and ran with their lives. Satrughna was, by this time, greatly enraged, and he followed the enemy, unaccompanied by his followers. The leader of the antiparty, Haldar, ran into his house and shut the outer gates. Satrughna began to kick violently with his bare legs against the spiked doors, which, unable to bear the heavy blows, gave way, and he entered the house of his enemy. He then went in search of his rival, upon which some of his opponents struck him with brick-bats in the delicate parts of his body, which deprived him of his senses. He was then carried off, from the scene, by his followers.

The antiparty now fancied, that Satrughna would prosecute them, and take the matter into law-court, for the unwarranted heavy assault and outrage, he had received at their hands. They, therefore, sent a messenger to him, the next morning, to ascertain the truth. Satrughna said :—‘I see, why you have come. Haldar fancies, I shall sue him ; does he ? O ! no, I am not so fool as to fill the pockets of lawyers and bailiffs with my money. This year he has beaten me, the next year I shall beat him. If we resort to law-court, our *Gajan* festival, for which we have been so much at daggers, will come to an end for ever.’ So saying,

he dismissed the messenger, who delivered the message faithfully. The antiparty were touched at their enemy's generosity, and at once repaired to his house, and earnestly prayed for his forgiveness. Haldar said :—'Bhattacharya, I did all this simply to put your prowess to test. It has been proved beyond doubt, that you possess not only strength, but also manliness. Your valour is equal to your forethought. I crave your forgiveness. Will you not forgive me?' Bhattacharya replied :—'You need not talk in this fashion. But none of you shall leave my house, without partaking of my poor meal. I invite you to-day to dinner.' The other party gladly accepted the invitation. The reconciliation was perfect.

On another occasion, as he was sitting, one day, with some of his co-villagers in a grocer's shop, a dealer appeared with a sack of pulse, weighing four maunds, for sale. His compatriots said :—'Bhattacharya, if you can carry the sack of pulse home, it is yours ; we make you a present of it'. Satrugna replied :—'No doubt, I can carry it, but not walking erect ; to carry the sack, I must walk on all fours, like a beast of burden ; you will only place a quilt on my back, and then lay the sack upon it.' The heavy sack was laid on his back as directed, and Satrugna, to the utter astonishment of all present, walked on all fours, with the sack of pulse on his back, to his home, a distance of more than a mile. Some two or three hundred

spectators followed him to his house, enjoying the sight. On being offered the sack of pulse, Satrugna Bhattacharya declined to accept it as a bet won. He said that he had nothing to do with the pulse, but that if they would procure the necessary fish and other vegetables, he was ready to feed the whole assembly with rice and *Dal*, prepared from the staked pulse. This was accordingly done.

A certain Ghosh of Khirpai of the *Sadgop* caste had taken to robbery. He lay in ambush in a thicket of reed or other long grass by the side of a canal, and, as opportunity presented itself, waylaid and plundered wayfarers, whom he sometimes killed, when necessity arose. He was a man of considerable physical strength, and the residents of Khirpai stood in terror of this dreadful robber. Once on a time, Satrugna Bhattacharya's elder brother said to him :—"Satu, it is strange indeed, that Ghosh is still a terror to the village, and you do not bring him to his senses ;" at which, Satrugna promised to his brother to bring round Ghosh in a very short time. One morning, Satrugna went out in the direction of the canal, and hid himself in a thicket, lying in wait for the robber. Presently he heard a rustling sound, and saw a movement of the thicket on the other side. He guessed that Ghosh had caught his prey. And he was right, for the robber had fallen on an up-country man, who was not much inferior to Ghosh in strength. Both of them were engaged in deadly struggle.

Satrughna Bhattacharya now issued from his covert, and suddenly appeared before them. No sooner did the robber recognise the Herculean Bhattacharya, than he ran for his life, and ascended on the top of a big *Simul* tree. The wayfarer had lost his sense, and Satrughna applied himself first to revive the man by sprinkling water on his face and head. He then went to the tree, where the robber had taken shelter, but could not ascend it, as he was a plump man himself, and the tree was thorny. He lay waiting below the tree for the robber, whom he asked to come down. But the robber dared not do his bidding. When Satrughna saw, that Ghosh would not descend from the tree, he thus addressed him :—‘Come down, Ghosh, swear by my feet, that you will not commit robbery any more, and I will forgive you this time.’ Ghosh replied from the top of the tree :—‘If you swear by your holy thread, that you will not molest me if I come down, I may do your bidding.’ Bhattacharya smiled and rejoined :—‘Will you believe me, if I say that I swear by my holy thread ?’ Ghosh answered :—‘You are prepared to believe me, if I swear by your feet ; and is it possible, that I shall not believe you, when you, a Brahman, will swear by your holy thread ?’ At this Satrughna swore by his holy thread that he would not molest the robber ; whereupon the latter came down from the tree, and swore by the Brahman’s feet, that he would never more engage himself in

robbery. Satrughna now forgave the robber, and dismissed him. He then returned home with the up-countryman, whom he had saved from the hands of the robber. He fed the wayfarer with kind care, and then let him go on his way.

Satrughna had once a painful, carbuncle, which required surgical operation. The surgeon in attendance was ready with chloroform for his inhalation to induce his insensibility. But the patient very composedly said to the doctor :—‘you need not apply chloroform ; you may operate upon me, and take it for granted that I am insensible.’ The surgeon threw aside the phial of chloroform and applied lancet. At the first attempt, the instrument broke in two, so tough was the patient’s skin. The operation was carried through with a second instrument, and the patient bore it with perfect composure.

Such was Satrughna Bhattacharya, the father of the fair girl, Dinamayi, who was married to Isvar Chandra. But we have digressed too long, and it is now proper, that we should resume the thread of our narrative.

At the age of fifteen, Isvar Chandra entered the *Rhetoric* class. Premchand Tarkavagis was the teacher of this class. He was equally erudite in grammar, language, and rhetoric, and taught the three subjects equally well. Most of his pupils attained great proficiency in Sanskrit. Of all the students of this class, Isvar Chandra was the

youngest in age, but the best in proficiency. He won the admiration of all. In one year, he finished the *Sahityadarpana*, *Kavyaprakasa*, *Rasagangadhar*, and other works on *rhbetoric*. At the annual examination, he stood first and won the highest prizes, both in books and money. * The *Raghuvansa*, *Sahityadarpana*, *Ratnabali*, *Malatimadhava*, *Mudrarakshasa*, *Vikramorvasi*, *Mrichchatika*,—these were the prize books, he was awarded this year.

But, for this examination, he had to work very hard. He had to sit up night after night, and read his books, for in the day-time, he had to do everything of the household work, as we have said before. He had not a wink of sleep for several nights in succession. After the examination was over, he fell ill with acute dysentery of a very severe type. The stools were very frequent and bloody. All sorts of treatment in Calcutta failed, and he was removed to Birsingha, as on the former occasion. No sooner did he recover from his illness, than he again returned to Calcutta, and took over charge of the usual household duties.

Previous to this, Isvar Chandra, on his way home from the College, used daily to visit Pandit *Taranath Tarkavachaspati's house, and there read the *Sahityadarpana*. One day, the then famous

* At this time, prizes were awarded to the best, meritorious boys in the shape of books, as well as of money in hard cash.

philosopher, Jaynarayan Tarkapanchanan, who had called there, saw Isvar Chandra reading the rhetorical book. The philosopher asked the boy if he understood the book, and at once began to examine him. He was greatly surprised that the little boy had mastered the book thoroughly, and remarked that the boy would, in time, be the best pundit in Bengal. Such was the praise young Isvar Chandra won, at an early age, from the greatest philosopher of the day.

At this time, Isvar Chandra got a monthly scholarship of eight rupees, which he made over to his father every month. As has been said before, Thakurdas had a great mind from the beginning to set up a *tol*, in his native village, with Isvar Chandra as professor. He therefore laid out a part of his son's scholarship funds in purchasing lands for the site of the *tol* and for the maintenance of students. * After the acquisition of the lands, he would not receive Isvar Chandra's stipend money, but directed his son to spend a portion of it in buying manuscript copies of rare and valuable Sanskrit books. Isvar Chandra procured many such manuscripts, and they are still to be found in his library.

Nor was this all. The heart of Isvar Chandra was as soft, as his mind was strong. He was kind and sympathetic, and always eager to relieve the

* In *tol*s of this country, pupils get, free of cost, both instruction and food.

distrest. He was a lover of mankind. His small heart was the seat of unbounded love and kindness. The slightest mention of affliction and suffering was sure to awaken his universal benevolence. Even at this early age, whenever he saw, or heard of, any fellow-creature in distress, he ran forward with eagerness with a helping hand. He had not much means at his command, but still he spent his last pice in succouring the poor and afflicted. What remained after his charities, he spent in a little tiffin after the school hours. When there were others present at his tiffin, he was sure to divide it with them. If he saw a poor man with ragged clothes, and happened not to have sufficient funds at his disposal at the time, he would borrow the required money from the porter of the College, and give the poor man a new piece of cloth. Whenever any of his school-fellows fell ill, Isvar Chandra was always at his bedside, attending and nursing him with great care and affection. If anybody had a contagious disease, and no one dared approach him, Isvar Chandra at all hazards was sure to attend his sick-bed, and nurse him gladly and fearlessly,

Whenever young Isvar Chandra visited his native village Birsingha, he, first of all, went to his former teacher, Kalikanta Chattopadhyay, and paid him his best respects. He then called at the houses of all his neighbours, one after the other, and enquired after their health and affairs. When

any of them was ill, he never failed to attend the sick-bed. He thus endeared himself to his villagers, who looked upon him as their best friend and benefactor. Even the sufferings of such lower animals, as cats and dogs, drew tears from his eyes. What a fountain of universal love and sympathy was hidden in the small heart of the young boy.

Isvar Chandra always regarded his elders with great esteem. His respect for them deepened with his age. Even in later years, when he had attained great knowledge and eminence, he never treated them with arrogance or disrespect, though they were much inferior to him in every respect. On the contrary, if his elders tried to forget their former tender love for him and to show signs of honour to him, he shrank from them with bashfulness. When he rose to be the Principal of the Sanskrit College, the then clerk of the College, Babu Ramdhan Gangopadhyay, who loved Isvar Chandra dearly, and to whom he had, one night, fled from his father for protection, as has been narrated before, rose from his seat, in honour of Isvar Chandra, at which the latter was greatly abashed, and said :—‘You see, my dear sir, I am still your beloved Isvar Chandra ; please do not put me to shame in this way.’ Ramdhan Babu was quite astonished at his superior’s goodness and modesty.

The reader may remember that, soon after his recovery from the severe dysentery, he was ill with,

Isvar Chandra had returned to Calcutta and taken over the charge of his usual domestic duties. But being still too weak, his younger brother, Dinabandhu, helped him now and then. One evening, Dinabandhu having gone out to market, did not return till ten O'clock in the night. Isvar Chandra was greatly anxious for his brother, and began to search for him from one bazar to the other. At last, he was found sleeping in the veranda of a small shop in Nutanbazar. The elder brother gently awoke him, and brought him back. It is said, that Dinabandhu was never afterwards allowed to go out by himself. *

After finishing the *Rhetoric* course, Isvar Chandra entered the *Smriti* (Law) class in the year 1837. The general practice, at that time, was that students had to pass through the *Philosophy* and *Vedanta* classes before they could be admitted into the *Smriti* class. But Isvar Chandra resolved to study *Smriti* first, for he had a great mind to pass the Law committee examination and become a *Judge-Pandit*, * and unless one passed this exa-

* Before the foundation of the Calcutta University, one intending to be a pleader of the Sudder Court (the present High Court) had to pass an examination conducted by the Law Committee, which was then under the Sudder Court. The Law Committee is not yet wholly extinct, its present functions being to conduct the Pleadership and Mukteraship examinations. Since 1857, when the University came into existence, it was ruled that the would-be pleaders

mination one could not aspire to that apost. He had, therefore, applied to the authorities and obtained permission from them to study *Smriti* before *Philosophy* and *Vedānta*. So difficult was the subject, that ordinary students, who had already passed through the *Philosophy* and *Vedānta* classes, took two to three years to study such books, as the *Mitākshara*, *Dayabhag*, and *Manusanghita*, and then to obtain a tolerable knowledge of *Smriti*. But how wondrous ! Young, unbearded Isvar Chandra, for he was then a mere lad of seventeen years, mastered the subject in six months' time ; at the end of which, he underwent the Law-Committee Examination, and came out successful. Of course, these six months he neither cooked his food, nor performed other functions of a domestic, and slept daily for two or three hours only. So powerful were his memory and intellect, that in six months he learned the whole *Smriti* by heart, and could easily repeat, and give a lucid explanation of, every line in it. All his teachers, colleagues, and contemporary pundits were wonder-struck at his extraordinary abilities. Was not Isvar Chandra a genius ?

of the Sudder Court must pass a Law examination under the University, before they could enter that honourable Court. In the early days of the English rule, there was a Pandit appointed in every district to give legal advices to the presiding judge on points of Hindu Law, in accordance with the Sastras. These Pandits, were generally called Judge-Pandits.

The wonderful talents of Isvar Chandra remind us of what the great Indian poet *Bhava Bhuti* has very justly sung on the subject:—

“বিতরতি গুরুঃ প্রাজ্ঞে বিদ্যাং যথৈব তথা জড়ৈ
ন তু খলু তয়োজ্জানে শক্তিং করোত্যপহন্তি বা ।
ভবতি চ তয়োজ্জান্ ভেদঃ ফলং প্রতি তদযথা
প্রভবতি শুচিৰ্বিশ্বগ্রাহে মণিন্ যুদাং চয়ঃ ॥” *i. e.*

‘The preceptor imparts instructions equally to the sharp and the dull ; but he can neither increase nor decrease their powers of comprehension. The great difference in the extent of their knowledge is due to their own merits. It is a pure, transparent gem, and not a lump of clay, that has the power of reflection.’

CHAPTER VI.

FURTHER STUDIES—CONCLUSION OF SCHOOL-LIFE.

Shortly after he had passed the Law Committee examination, the post of the *Judge-Pandit* of Tippera, a district in East Bengal, fell vacant. Young Isvar Chandra applied for the situation, and was favoured with the appointment. But his father would not permit him to go to such a distance. He was, therefore, obliged to decline the offer. He had toiled hard to pass the law examination, and then had applied for the post, simply to help his father in his pecuniary difficulties. But

when that father wished him not to go, how could Isvar Chandra accept the post, against his father's will ? He was so much devoted to his parents, that he considered them to be his only objects of worship. He had no other gods or goddesses before them. He could not act against their wishes.

He had still two subjects to learn,—*Vedānta* (Theology) and *Philosophy*. He entered the *Vedānta* class at the age of nineteen. Sambhu Chandra Vachaspati, the learned professor of that class, was highly amazed at the merits of Isvar Chandra, and loved him as dearly as if he was his own son.

According to the practice then obtaining in the Sanskrit College, a separate examination on essay-writing, both prose and poetry, was held every year at the annual examinations of the *Vedānta* and *Philosophy* classes, and a prize of one hundred rupees in cash was given to each of the best essayists. Three hours were allowed for each essay,—10 A.M. to 1 P.M. for prose, and 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. for poetry. Isvar Chandra, fancying his inability, was absent from this examination. Prem-Chand Tarkavagis, the teacher of the *Rhetoric* class, not finding Isvar Chandra among the examinees, began to look for him. The teacher, at last, discovered him sitting in a corner of his class-room. He remonstrated with his favourite pupil on his shyness, and after much persuasion

and pressure, induced him to appear at the examination at 12 O'clock. The subject for that year's prose composition was *Truthfulness*. Isvar Chandra's essay was considered the best, and he won the prize of one hundred rupees. He had now the satisfaction to see the tree of his hard toil fruitful. Sooner or later, honest labour must have its fruits. Such is God's dispensation. Isvar Chandra's second composition in poetry too was considered one of the best, and he won a prize for that also.

Here, again, at this young age, we find in Isvar Chandra a noble instance of strength of mind, independence of opinion, firmness of purpose, soundness of judgment, and gentleness of heart. While in the Vedanta class, his teacher Sambhu Chandra Vachaspati, like all his former teachers, was greatly attached to him for his merits, and consulted him on all points. He was a widower at this time, and was grown old and infirm; but he had a great mind to enter again into married life. He consulted Isvar Chandra, seeking his advice on the point. The young pupil heard the arguments of his teacher patiently, but could discover nothing important in them. He thought the professor's proposal extremely unreasonable and selfish, and openly expostulated with the old man on the impropriety of his resolution. Vachaspati was greatly offended with his pupil at his strong protests, and made strenuous attempts to bring

him to his opinion, but in vain. Isvar Chandra was as fixed and immovable as the Himalayas, Sambhu Chandra was, at that time, the family-Pandit of Chhatu Babu and Latu Babu, sons of the late Ram Dulal Sarkar, the well-known self-made millionaire of Calcutta. Through the influence of these two rich men and of Babu Ram Ratan Ray, the wealthy Zemindar of Narail, the old and decrepit Sambhu Chandra was married to a beautiful little girl of Barasat. Isvar Chandra was greatly displeased with his teacher for making such an unreasonable alliance, but being affectionately attached to each other, he could not cut off all communications with him. After the marriage was over, the old professor, one day, took his pupil to see his young bride. Isvar Chandra went with his teacher reluctantly, and placed two rupees at his wife's feet as a present of honour. He was then receding back without looking at the unfortunate girl's face, when his teacher caught hold of his arms, and did not leave him till he had a full sight of his new wife. Isvar Chandra only cast a glance at the beautiful girl's face, and immediately left the place. The sight move his gentle heart, and drew tears from his eyes. He foresaw the miserable, wretched life, which the unfortunate, little girl must live in a very short time, and he sobbed and wept like a child. It is superfluous to say that Sambhu Chandra died not long after the unfortunate alliance, leaving the

little girl to live the austere, ascetic life of a Hindu widow.

It has already been mentioned, that his third brother, Sambhuchandra, had joined Thakurdas's little family in Calcutta, and the number of members had risen from three to four. Moreover, Thakurdas having, at this time, married his second son, Dinabandhu, he had contracted some debts. He was, therefore, constrained to considerably reduce his family expenses, which had never been very liberal. It is said that only one pice was now allowed for the tiffin of the four members. The dishes prepared for the daily meals were very poor, and hardly fit for eating. Nor did their troubles end here. Jagaddurlabh Babu, who had so long given them shelter, was also deeply immersed in debts. The room in the third floor of his house, where Thakurdas slept with his sons, Jagaddurlabh Babu had let to a tenant. Thakurdas was, therefore, obliged to remove with his sons to a room in the lowest floor, quite unfit for a gentleman's lodging. What trying difficulties ! In later years, Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, alluding to the painful situation of these days, thus spoke to one of his friends :—'I suffered many troubles in my early years, but I never minded them for my own sake. They rather served to heighten my zeal—to invigorate me—to incite me to action. But the sufferings and privations of my brothers rent my heart. The very sight of

their dejected, mournful faces drew tears from my eyes.' Such was the depth of Isvar Chandra's fraternal love. It was not at all strange that the universal philanthropist, whose heart melted at the very tale of other people's distress, should love his own brothers so affectionately and sincerely.

After finishing the *Vedanta* (Theology) course, Isvar Chandra entered the *Nyaya* (Philosophy) class. The great pundit Nimchand Siromani was, at that time, the teacher of this class. But shortly after this, he died, and Pandit Jay Narayan Tarkaratna was, at the instance of Isvar Chandra, appointed to the post. Was it not a glory to a pupil, that he could nominate his professor? At the second year's examination of this class, he stood first and won the first prize of one hundred rupees. His paper on poetical composition was also the best, and he won a further sum of one hundred rupees as prize for that composition. These two hundred rupees went a great way to help his father in the clearance of his debts. What wonderful talents did Isvar Chandra possess! During the period of his studies in this class, he used now and then to visit his native village, Birsingha, and there enter into debates on this difficult subject with the learned Pandits of the neighbourhood. It is said that, on one occasion, he had an earnest debate on old *Nyaya* with Ram Mohan Tarkasiddhanta, one of the greatest philosophers of the time. Tarkasiddhanta was defeated. When

Thakurdas heard of the incident, he ran to the scene, and laid the dust of the vanquished pundit's feet on Isvar Chandra's head, because the latter was much younger in age. .

While still reading in the *Nyaya* class, he was appointed for two months as officiating second teacher of Grammar on a monthly salary of forty rupees. He placed the whole of the eighty rupees of his first earning into the hands of his father, and requested him to go on a pilgrimage, which the father very gladly did. When he returned from the pilgrimage, he found that his son, Isvar Chandra, had won one hundred rupees as first prize for the *Nyaya* examination, a further sum of one hundred rupees, as prize for the best poetical composition, twenty-five rupees as prize for proficiency in Law, and eight rupees for good hand-writing, making in all two hundred and thirty-three rupees. This sum the devoted son made over to his father, who paid it off to clear a part of his debts.

When Isvar Chandra passed the final examination of the Sanskrit College, he won the title of *Vidyasagar* from the College. He was then only twenty years old. How many are there who can attain to such eminence at such an early age? Surely, Isvar Chandra must have been uncommonly gifted. Every one of his teachers, from the village schoolmaster, Kalikanta Chattopadhyay, to the professor, of the College, was

highly satisfied with his proficiency, and thought it a pride to have had Isvar Chandra for his pupil. Besides the Government certificate, the learned professors of the College granted him a separate certificate of his brilliant success, countersigned by Babu Rassomay Dutta, the then Secretary to the College.

Before bringing this chapter to its conclusion, we will try to notice briefly Isvar Chandra's attempts at essay-writing.

Essay-writing is a great help to the acquisition of knowledge in a language. A piece of written composition is one of the best tests of one's command of a tongue. When Isvar Chandra was a student of the Sanskrit College, both the teachers and the authorities of the College as well as the pupils, paid great attention to original composition. To encourage the students in this respect, prizes were awarded to the best essayists. Every student essayed at good composition. The pupils, as well as their teachers, had a great earnest zeal for this. The present University system had not then been introduced. The students were not forced to pay equal attention to the different branches. Every one was free to take up a particular branch according to his own inclination. He could thus devote his whole time and attention to that branch, and make a good progress in it. The present system of cramming leaves no room for culture of a particular branch,

Although there were nice arrangements in the Sanskrit College for award of prizes to the best essay-writers, Isvar Chandra had no mind to attempt at these prizes. His impression was that, in this age of degeneration, no one was capable of writing good Sanskrit. He had formed that impression from the composition of several of his colleagues. It was, therefore, that he did not appear at his first examination on Sanskrit composition. We have seen, however, that he was pressed to attend the examination. He finished his essay on *Truthfulness*, which was the subject for that year, in one hour's time, and won the first prize of one hundred rupees, as we have mentioned before.

It is true that Isvar Chandra was not very eager to appear at these examinations, but whenever he did appear, his essay was considered the best, and he won prizes. Essay-writing is not practised in *Tols*, nor had there been any such practice in the Sanskrit College till 1838, when it was ruled that students of *Smriti*, *Nyaya* and *Vedanta* must undergo a separate examination on essay-writing.

The subject of essay for the second year was *Knowledge*, and Isvar Chandra won this prize too.

During the first two years of this examination, Mr. G. T. Marshall was Secretary to the Sanskrit College. In the third year, Babu Rassamay Dutta was the Secretary. This year, the subject of essay was "The Penance of Raja Agnidhra," Rassa-

may Babu gave a few words, and required the examinees to write on them a poetical composition. Isvar Chandra's composition won the admiration of Rassamay Babu. .

In the year 1838, Mr. John Mayor, a civilian, offered a prize of one hundred rupees in cash for the best poetical essay in one hundred *Slokas* on a description of this globe of the earth and the celestial globe, according to the ancient Hindu Puran, Suryyasiddhanta, and the modern European notions. Isvar Chandra's poem was considered the best, and he won the prize. These *Slokas* were under publication in the form of a booklet, while Vidyasagar was still alive, but were not out of press then. The publication has since been complete. The book now contains 408 *Slokas*. Most probably, the additional *Slokas* in excess of Mr. Mayor's requisition, were added in his later years. In the beginning of this book, there is ample evidence of Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar's belief in God, devotion to his preceptor, and humility of heart.

CHAPTER VII, ENTRANCE INTO THE WORLD :—

FIRST APPOINTMENT.

We have seen Isvar Chandra as a little child ; we have seen him as a naughty village school-boy ; we have also seen him as a College student, winning the praise and admiration of every body, he came in contact with. But this was only the bud of a large, sweet-smelling flower, waiting to expand in full bloom,—the sprout of a big tree, to develop into spreading branches, bearing nice fruits in time, —the beginning of a great end. He has left to the poor student an unparalleled example of infinite toil, deep earnestness, forbearing patience, untiring perseverance, resolute self-reliance, and unprecedented success, even under circumstances most discouraging and adverse. He has clearly shown to the world, that poverty is no bar to the attainment of success in an honest undertaking.

We now proceed, step by step, to that part of his life, where the qualities of his early years developed themselves to their full extent, bringing in, in their train, other qualities, equally noble and fascinating. He was now standing on the threshold of his worldly life, which was full of events displaying his intrepidity in danger, vivacity in despondency, love for mankind, disinterestedness in every undertaking, and modesty in prosperity. These qualities were conspicuous in his life at all times, from the very first day of his entrance into the

world to the last day of his life. His infinite kindness and unbounded love for all creatures were prominent in almost all his acts. Unfortunately, his deeds did not meet with general approbation. But this was not Vidyasagar's fault (we shall henceforth call him by this name, which he so gloriously obtained from his College). As men are of different opinions, so they must differ in the appreciation of a deed. However that might be, there is not an iota of doubt, that he was always actuated by unselfish motives and a strong impulse of universal good-will. Whatever he thought good, he tried to accomplish, in spite of every obstacle. He was never dejected by failures, nor daunted by menaces. He was always untiring in perseverance. He detested laziness. Want of occupation was a source of great annoyance to him. He was never fatigued with toils. Time unemployed hung heavily on him. Occupation was his best recreation. What the famous writer Seadon Smith said on this point, has been amply verified in Vidyasagar's life ;—"Let every man be occupied, and occupied in the highest employment of which he is capable, and die with the consciousness that he has done the best."

Vidyasagar's first appointment was under Mr. Marshall in the Fort William College. This college had been established in Calcutta in the year 1800 for the education of those civilians, who came out from the Halibury College for employment in India, in

the different vernaculars of the country. The competitive Civil Service examination * had not then been introduced. The students of the Hali-bury College had to pass an examination in Bengali, Hindi, Urdu, Persian, &c. before their appointment, and those that failed to pass it, had to go back to Europe. These civilians were then called the 'Writers of the East India Company,' and the house where they lodged were called after them, the 'Writers'-Building.' In the midst of this building, there was the Fort William College with its office. In this office were employed a 'Head Writer' or 'Cashier', and under him, two to three clerks to do clerical work. Besides these, a Hindu Pandit and a Mahomedan Maulavi were employed as teachers. The former Head Pandit, Madhusudan Tarkalankar having died, the post was vacant. Mr. Marshall, the Secretary to the College, was on the look-out for a qualified man. He set his eyes on Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, whom he had known for many years, while he was Secretary to the Sanskrit College, to be uncommonly intelligent, exceedingly laborious, highly persevering, and generally proficient in every branch. He called personally at the Sanskrit College, and enquired for Vidyasagar of Jay Narayan Tarkapanchanan, who, in his turn, informed Thakurdas, Vidyasagar's father, of everything. Vidyasagar was, at this

* The competitive examination was first held in England in 1854, and the system is still in force.

time, in his native village, Birsingha, enjoying the sweet pleasures of a country seat and the happiness of his mother's company. Thakurdas at once sent for him. He soon reached Calcutta, and was appointed to the vacant post in December, 1841, on a salary of fifty rupees a month.

In this connection, we may note here, in passing, that Mr. Marshall was a great appreciator of merits. When the post of the Head Pandit of the Fort William College fell vacant, there were many candidates for the situation. Babu Kalidas Datta, a resident of Bowbazar, was in terms of great intimacy with Mr. Marshall. They had a great affection for each other. Kalidas Babu earnestly recommended a particular Pandit, a friend of his, for the post. But Mr. Marshall rejected his earnest solicitations, saying that he had already selected Vidyasagar for the post. When Kalidas Babu heard Vidyasagar's name mentioned, he approved of the choice, for he had also known Isvar Chandra for a long time.

In fact, the Europeans of those days had a sort of liking for the natives, and appreciated their merits. Unlike the present day, they treated the natives of the soil with a degree of kindness, affection and respect, befitting their merits. But unfortunately for us, the tide has turned. What is the cause of this change? Opinions differ on this point. Some say, that before the introduction of the system of competitive examination, when the appoint-

ment of Civil Servants was made by nomination, only descendants of high families came out to this country as Civilians. They were born of noble families, and were naturally imbued with generous feelings. They looked upon the natives as their fellow-brethren, whom they had come not only to rule, but also to enlighten and educate, so as to be able to help them in the administration of the country. But the present competitive examination, which has replaced the former nomination system, leaves no room to take into account birth or descent in the selection of these officers. As a matter of consequence, those, who come from comparatively lower families, being naturally short of generous feelings, look down upon the natives of the soil as mere barbarians and slaves. They do not think that the natives are human beings, creatures of God, like themselves, and bear no love for them. Another opinion is, that the natives of the present day, having obtained a high Western education, and having imbibed notions of equality and independence of spirit from the Europeans, do not treat them with proper deference. On the contrary, they claim from the ruling race some sort of respect. This the Europeans naturally resent. Hence their dislike and hatred for the natives. The Illbert Bill agitation has left a standing mark to bear testimony to this fact. In our humble opinion, both of these opinions are correct to some extent.

During his employment in the Fort William

College, which was his first appointment, Vidyasagar displayed an independence of spirit and love of justice, which were conspicuous throughout his life. We have mentioned before, that those would-be civilians, who failed at the vernacular examinations, had to go back to England disappointed. Mr. Marshall felt a great pity for them, and, to avoid their disappointment, he requested Vidyasagar to soften the stiffness of the examinations and to take a somewhat lenient view of their answers, on which Vidyasagar openly declared in unequivocal terms, that he would rather resign his post than act dishonourably. Mr. Marshall, who was an upright man himself, and a great lover of justice, was highly pleased, rather than annoyed, at the honesty of his young subordinate. Here was only the beginning of that noble heroism, which was so conspicuous throughout his after-life. He was a poor man, bred and brought up amidst the privations and troubles of indigence. He had no one to back him. A post of fifty rupees of those days was more than a valuable property to a man of his circumstances. But still even for the sake of that, he was not prepared to sacrifice his conscience, and condescend to meanness and foul play. The reader will find many such instances in his later-life.

Shortly after his installation to this post, Vidyasagar began to learn English and Hindi simultaneously. The would-be civilians of the Fort

William College had to undergo monthly examinations. Vidyasagar's main duty was to examine their answer papers. Besides this, he had to teach Mr. Marshall Sanskrit. He had thus to come always in contact with the British. Hence was the necessity of his learning English. He had, moreover, to see the Hindi answer papers. A knowledge of Hindi was, therefore, absolutely necessary for him. Hindi, like Bengali, has its origin in Sanskrit, and bears much similarity to Bengali as well as to Sanskrit. So Hindi was not difficult for him to learn. He engaged a Hindi teacher on a monthly salary of ten rupees, and learned the Hindi language in a short time. But the acquisition of English, which was a foreign tongue, was not so easy. He had to spend a great deal of time and labour, and even some money, on it. Nothing was impossible with the persevering Vidyasagar.

Most of those that have been reputed as great geniuses, and who have immortalised their names by noble deeds, were bred and brought up in poverty. Nay, some of them were, in their early life, employed in humble occupations. But they were always far superior to the ordinary rank. No difficulty was insurmountable to them. They never gave up a task, simply because it was difficult. Had they not been endowed with this superior merit, they could never have left such indelible, conspicuous footmarks for the guidance of their descendants. Garfield, one of the late Presidents of

the United States of America, was the son of a farmer. The great Napoleon, who rose to be Emperor of France, was at first employed as a private. Benjamin Franklin was a printer. The great poet Chaucer was an ordinary soldier. Shakspeare was an actor. But why seek other countries? What was Keshub Chunder Sen, the great Bengali orator? He was at first a mere clerk of twenty rupees. Harish Chunder Mukharji, the first independent-spirited Editor of the "Hindoo Patriot" was an humble clerk. Lord Clive, the Founder of the British Empire in India, came out to this country as a clerk to the East India Company. The great Vidyasagar, of whom we are speaking, and who, by dint of perseverance, assiduity and honesty, rose to such eminence, began with a post of fifty rupees. It was not, therefore, very strange that he should apply himself to learn English with his usual zeal and earnestness, and be able to master it soon.

The famous Doctor Durga Charan Banarji, father of Babu Surendranath Banarji, the present great orator of Bengal, and renowned Editor of "The Bengalee," was his first English teacher. Durga Charan Babu was not a doctor (medical practitioner) then. He was, at that time, a teacher in the Hare School. He used daily to visit Vidyasagar's house, and there engage himself in various pastimes. The post of the Head Writer in the Fort William College having, at this time, fallen vacant, Durga Charan Babu was appointed to the post, on a

monthly salary of eighty rupees, by Mr. Marshall, on the recommendation of Vidyasagar. There was thus a great intimacy between the two. While employed in this office, Durga Charan Babu attended the Medical College lectures as an Out-student, and afterwards adopted the profession of an independent medical practitioner, in which he was eminently successful. He was a great help to Vidyasagar in his many acts of philanthropy.

Vidyasagar's second teacher was Raj Narayan Basu, with whom he read English for a short time. In this connection the two gent'emen formed an intimate friendship, which lasted to life. His next teacher was Babu Nil Madhav Mukharji, pupil of Babu Durga Charan Banarji, of whom mention has been made before. At last, he entertained the services of Babu Raj Narayan Gupta, then a student of the Hindu College, as his private English teacher on a stipend of fifteen rupees a month. To learn European Mathematics, he used to go to Ananda Krishna Basu, Amrita Lal Mitra, and Srinath Ghosh at the Sobhabazar Raj house. * He made some attempts to learn the subject, but it did

* Ananda Krishna Basu was a grandson of Raja Radha Kanta Dev Bahadur of Shobhabazar, being the son of his eldest daughter. Amrita Lal Mitra and Srinath Ghosh, both were his sons-in-law. All of them had studied in the Hindu College, and were well versed in the English literature. Vidyasagar had formed a great friendship with all of them.

not suit his taste. Besides, he considered the subject dry, and at last gave it up.

He now pursued the course of his natural taste, and made great self-advancement. When one devotes himself to the study of a particular subject, which is agreeable to his taste, one can make much improvement in it. On the contrary, when one is forced to take up a subject, which one has no liking for, one cannot devote all his energies to it, and, consequently, can make no progress in it. As is the case with one's education, so is the case with one's calling. In this connection one writer says ;— "It is often seen that many persons do not succeed in their business, simply because they could not, or were not allowed, to make a proper selection. They have not the particular capacity for the occupations they have been engaged in. For instance, one who has no capacity for the Law, but for Medicine, has taken up the Law for one's profession ; or, one who has no taste for Medicine, but only for Engineering, has been made to adopt the Medical profession. How can such a one expect success ?"

Surely, one ought to be allowed to follow his own inclinations. The above writer also says, that a man's bodily and mental marks clearly indicate what business he is fit for. Some European philosophers are of the same opinion too. But this is not always true. Doctor Gilbert has come to the conclusion, that a large head is the seat of intellect

and genius. But, when we take into account the heads of such intelligent and talented great men, as Alexander, Julius Cæsar, Frederick the Great, Byron, Bacon, Plato, Aristotle, and others, we arrive at a different conclusion. Would it not be better then if, instead of relying on these doubtful conclusions, every one had tried to follow and better the calling of his forefathers. The ancient Hindus bestowed their best thoughts on the subject, and apportioned a particular occupation for each, to be strictly adhered to, by his descendants. Thus originated the Hindu caste system, the propriety or otherwise of which we leave the reader to judge.

After giving up Mathematics, Vidyasagar began to read Shakspeare with Babu Ananda Krishna Basu. For this purpose, he often frequented the Sobhabazar Raj house, which, in a few days, had also the effect of making him acquainted with Raja Radha Kanta Dev Bahadur. It so happened that, one day, when the Raja Bahadur was washing his face and hands after dinner, Vidyasagar passed by him, on his way to Ananda Krishna Babu. The Raja Bahadur caught a glimpse of him, and enquired of a relation who was near by ;—‘Who is that stout and strong, handsome Brahman youth who passed by us ? His very appearance indicates that he is a man of uncommon genius, Send for him at once.’ Vidyasagar immediately appeared before the Raja Bahadur, who heard from him,

everything connected with his life. The Raja was highly delighted at his conversation, and at once knew him to be a highly talented man. Isvar Chandra was, at that time, an ordinary youth with only the title *Vidyasagar* recently obtained from his College. He was not then the famous, great Vidyasagar of later years.

It was in this Sobhabazar Raj house that Vidyasagar was acquainted with Babu Akshay Kumar Dutt, one of the greatest Bengali writers, and formed an intimacy with him. Akshay Babu was not then the Editor of the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, An association called the *Tattvabodhini Sabha* had been formed in connection with the Brahmo Samaj in the month of October, 1839. From the year 1843, this association began to publish a Bengali monthly magazine, called the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, under the care and patronage of Babu Devendra Nath Tagore and some other eminent men of the time. Akshay Babu had been a member of this association from the beginning, and he was afterwards intrusted with the edition of this magazine, which he did honestly and creditably for twelve years, up to 1855.

All the contributions to the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* passed through the hands of Ananda Krishna Babu and some other educated men of the time, who had to go through the articles, and make necessary corrections. One day, when Vidyasagar was sitting with Ananda Krishna Babu in the latter's house,

a messenger appeared with a piece of Akshay Babu's composition intended for the periodical. Ananda Krishna Babu read out the article to Vidyasagar, and asked his opinion about it. It was a piece of translation from English, impregnated with European ideas and notions. The former translations of Akshay Babu were all of this sort. In reply to Ananda Krishna Babu's query, Vidyasagar said that the style of the composition was not bad, but that it was somewhat impregnated with European ideas. He then made some alterations and corrections in it, at the request of Ananda Krishna Babu. Subsequent to this, Vidyasagar had to make such corrections on several occasions. Akshay Babu saw that these corrections were far superior to the usual ones, and wondered who could be the author of them. To satisfy his curiosity he, one day, appeared in person before Ananda Krishna Babu, and learned that they were Vidyasagar's doings. It was thus that Akshay Babu came in contact with the young pundit and formed his acquaintance. By degrees, this acquaintance grew into sincere friendship, which ripened with their age.

This was a happy combination for the newly-born Bengali language. Every native of Bengal should commemorate the eventful period in his heart of hearts, and rejoice in the fortunate union. Both Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar and Akshay Kumar Datta may be said to have laid down their

lives for the development of their mother language. The combination of Addison and Steel is considered by the English to be the origin of the progress and spread of modern English, and they still congratulate on the happy event. Many educated Bengalees too look upon the day of the union of Addison and Steel as a day of their national festival. But how many Bengalees are there who ever call to mind the fortunate combination of Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar and Askhay Kumar Datta? How ungrateful we are !

For some time, a sub-committee, styled the "Paper-committee," was formed in connection with the *Tattvabodhini Sabha*. Ananda Krishna Basu, Raj Narayan Basu, Rajendra Lal Mitra, Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Radha Ballabh Ray, Syama Charan Mukharji, Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari, and Ananda Chandra Vedantavagis were elected members for this Sub-committee. These members were designated paper-examiners, and Akshay Babu was paper-editor. The *Tattvabodhini Sabha* was Devendra Nath Babu's beloved object. He had always the association at his heart. If he found anywhere anything new and useful, he tried to bring it in. He had introduced the "paper-committee," in imitation of a committee of the same name in the Asiatic Society. The business of the newly formed committee was to examine and correct all the books and writings intended to be published by the *Tattvabodhini Sabha*. No such writ,

ing or book could be published unless and until approved of by this committee. Great benefits were derived from this system. Nothing incorrect or unchaste, either in language or sense, even if it were from the pen of a paper-examiner, was printed. Akshay Babu himself admitted that he was greatly benefited by his being associated with Vidyasagar in this way:

Proposed by Babu Akshay Kumar Datta, and seconded by all other members, Vidyasagar was nominated a member for the "Paper-Committee". In this connection he came in touch with Babu Devendra Nath Tagore, who since that time bore a great respect for him. It may not be out of place to note here, in passing, that Vidyasagar had no connection with the then *Brahma Samaj*. He was connected only with the "Paper-Committee". Even Akshay Babu, who edited the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, had to seek the opinion and permission of the "Paper-Committee" on his own compositions, before they could be published in the periodical. In support of this, we quote below a copy of some correspondence on the subject, which passed between editor and some of the examiners ;—

"I beg to send herewith a copy of an article on the "History of the Kavirpanthis." Please do the needful.

Tattvabodhini Sabha,	}	Sd. Akshay Kumar Datta
1770 Sak, 14 Asharh		
		Paper-editor."

"I am glad to read the copy sent by you. It

has been nicely got up and written in easy, chaste language. I, therefore, gladly approve of its publication in the Patrika (magazine).

· Sd. Isvar Chandra Sarma”

“The corrections and alterations made by Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar here and there have been very nice.

Sd. Syama Charan Mukhopadhyay.”

It was at the instance of Babu Akshay Kumar Datta, that Vidyasagar commenced publishing his translation of the Mahabharat in February, 1848, in the sixty-seventh issue of the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*. Some portions of its Adiparvva had only been brought into publication, when Babu Kali Prasanna Singha requested him to desist, and, with his permission, began to publish his translation of the great epic. Kali Prasanna Babu himself has acknowledged it :—

“In the translation of the Mahabharat I have had to seek and obtain much assistance from many learned men. I am, therefore, under a deep debt of obligation and gratefulness to them. Of these, my venerable friend, Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, was the foremost. He had himself begun a translation of the Mahabharat and already published a part of it, in several issues of the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, as well as in the form of pamphlets. But when he came to learn that I was endeavouring to issue a translation of the great poem, he very kindly desisted from his translation. If he had not

done so, I could never have finished my version. Not only did he forego his desire of translating the Mahabharat, but took the trouble of going through my translation whenever he had leisure for it, and even personally attended my printing press and superintended the translation of the Mahabharat, when business called me away from Calcutta, now and then. In fact, language, written or spoken, cannot express the extent of benefits I have obtained from Vidyasagar in different forms at different times, since I was a student."

Before he commenced the translation of the Mahabharat, Vidyasagar had written two other Bengali books, *Basudeva Charita* and *Vetala Panchavingsati*. In the language of these two books he has amply proved his powers of translation, of which hereafter.

Babu Akshay Kumar Datta, the worthy editor of the "Tattvabodhini Patrika," having resigned his post for ill-health, a motion moved by Babu Kanai Lal Pain and seconded by Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, was brought forward before a meeting of the *Tattvabodhini Sabha* for award of some pension to the able editor. Babu Devendra Nath Tagore opposed the motion. His argument was that the pension was allowable, if the income of the "Tattvabodhini Patrika" left a margin for it; but that when the income of the "Tattvabodhini Sabha" and that of the "Tattvabodhini Patrika" were combined, no such pension was judiciously and rightly allow-

able. But the motion was carried by a majority of votes, and a monthly pension of twenty-five rupees was granted to Babu Akshay Kumar Datta. There can be no doubt, that the pension was granted chiefly through the exertions of Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar.

Some time after the resignation of Babu Askhay Kumar Datta, Vidyasagar also cut off his connection with the *Tattvabodhini Sabha*. This was owing to difference of opinion with Babu Devendra Nath Tagore in some respects. No wonder that a conflict of the opinions of two such independent-spirited men should bring about their separation. The friction of two pieces of dry, hard wood, or the collision of a piece of steel against a piece of flint is sure to produce sparkles of fire. It was for a similar reason, that Keshub Chunder Sen and some of his associates severed their connection with the *Brahma Samaj*.

When Vidyasagar was himself engaged in learning English privately at his own residence, he had, in his turn, to give private lessons in Sanskrit to a number of elderly scholars. Syama Charan Sarkar, one of the translators of the *Sudder Court*, Ramratan Mukharji, Nilmani Mukharji, Raj Krishna Banarji, and some other gentlemen were among his pupils. His mode of imparting instruction was so ingenious, that he could make his pupils easily master even a difficult subject. The learned professors of the Sanskrit College were

quite amazed at his novel mode of instruction. He took great pains for the education of his pupils. To enable the reader to form some idea of his mode of instruction, we will try to describe briefly how Raj Krishna Babu acquired his knowledge in Sanskrit from Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar.

Raj Krishna Babu was a grandson of the late famous Hriday Ram Bandyopadhyay of Bowbazar. He was, at this time, only 15 or 16 years old. His house stood in front of that of Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar. He had studied English for some time in the Hindu College, but had given it up at this early age. He had formed an acquaintance of Vidyasagar, and used to visit his house every morning and evening. One day, he heard Dinabandhu (Vidyasagar's younger brother) reading Kalidas's *Meghaduta* in tones of music. Raj Krishna Babu was fascinated by the young boy's sweet recital of the elegant poem, and he felt a strong desire to learn Sanskrit. He gave out his mind to Vidyasagar, who promised to teach him the ancient language. But Vidyasagar was afraid, that Raj Krishna Babu was now grown too old to begin with the *Mugdhabodha* or any other Sanskrit grammar, and that he might lose his patience, and give it up as a mere waste of time. Vidyasagar, therefore, thought of devising some method, by which he could make the learning of Sanskrit attractive, as well as easy, to his pupil. So he dismissed Raj Krishna Babu for that day, and set

himself on thinking of a novel mode of teaching Grammar. When Raj Krishna Babu called the next morning, he found to his utter astonishment, that a short abridgment of the Sanskrit grammar, *Mugdhabodha*, in Bengali characters, from the Alphabet to the Inflexion of Verbs, composed by Vidyasagar, was ready for his use. This was the basis of Vidyasagar's *Upakramanika*, a brief Sanskrit Grammar in Bengali. *Upakramanika* has opened a new, easy way to the Sanskrit Literature. This single treatise is sufficient to clearly demonstrate Vidyasagar's superior intellect and ingenuity.

With the aid of this manuscript, abridged grammar and an elementary Sanskrit book printed at the Baptist Press, Raj Krishna Babu began to learn Sanskrit. In three months, he acquired a little knowledge of the language, and had some conception of its grammar. At the end of this period, he began to read the *Mugdhabodha*, which he, by dint of his indefatigable zeal and toil, and unremitting perseverance, and through Vidyasagar's ingenious mode of instruction, mastered in six months. He then applied himself to the study of the Sanskrit Literature. Vidyasagar now urged Raj Krishna Babu to prepare himself for the Junior Scholarship examination of the Sanskrit College. The system of Junior and Senior Scholarship examinations had been introduced into Sanskrit College by Mr. Marshall. Raj Krishna Babu applied himself in right earnest, and was fully prepared for the ex-

amination, when Vidyasagar suddenly heard that a poor Brahman boy was getting the Junior Scholarship of eight rupees. Vidyasagar was afraid that if Raj Krishna Babu should appear at the examination and succeed in winning the scholarship, the poor boy would be deprived of his only means. He informed Raj Krishna Babu of everything, and told him to desist, for the present, from his attempts at the Junior Scholarship examination. He then urged his apt pupil to prepare himself for the Senior Scholarship examination ; at which Raj Krishna Babu said,—‘Do you think, I shall be able to qualify myself for that?’ Vidyasagar replied,—‘Why not ; but, mind, you shall have to take more pains. Only if you accompany me every day to the Fort William College, I believe, I shall be able to make you fit for the examination.’ Raj Krishna Babu agreed to this, and accompanied him daily to the Fort William College. Vidyasagar was occupied in teaching the Civilians and in doing other duties up to 3 P.M., after which he devoted himself wholly in giving lessons to Raj Krishna Babu till sun-set. They then returned to their houses, and after supper, again applied themselves in giving and receiving instruction to a late hour in the night. By such unremitting toil and perseverance, both on the part of the pupil and the teacher, Raj Krishna Babu was fully instructed in Sanskrit Grammar, Belles-lettres and Smṛiti, in two years and a half. He appeared at the Senior Scholarship

examination of 1843-44, and passed it creditably with a second grade scholarship of fifteen rupees a month. Two years after this, he won a first grade scholarship of twenty rupees. He had a great mind to appear at the next higher (*i. e.*, final) examination, but, unfortunately, his health having been very much impaired by his excessive toils, he was obliged to forego his design, and remove to a sanitarium to recruit his broken health.

The news of this unparalleled success soon spread like bonfire, and surprised even the learned professors of the Sanskrit College. People of all classes daily crowded Vidyasagar's house, with an eager desire to have a sight of the unusually intelligent and hardworking pupil and of his ingenious and clever teacher. In fact, the mode of instruction adopted by Vidyasagar was quite novel, and was a conspicuous proof of his inventive genius. Was it very strange then, that the people were so curious about it? When the famous Scotch author Carlyle devised his new plan, and books were published under the novel device, many learned and wise men of the time hurried to the farm of Dumfrey in the hilly tracts of far Scotland to have a sight of the famous author. Even Emerson, the great philosophical writer of America, visited Scotland, and satisfied his curiosity by seeing Carlyle with his own eyes. Such is the fascinating attraction of all novel, ingenious plans and methods.

Madan Mohan Tarkalankar was one of Vidya-

sagar's early friends. They had been acquainted since both of them were in the Grammar class, and they were slowly drawn to each other. By degrees, they formed an intimate friendship, which ripened with their age and made them very closely united. In later years, whenever Vidyasagar attempted at, or began, a noble, benevolent deed, Madan Mohan was always by his side, lending a helping hand with all his zeal and ardour. In some cases the two were found to be equally eager and interested, and it would then be very difficult to distinguish the principal from the assistant. Vidyasagar's friendship was always sincere and uniform. He could never be apathetic to one whom he had once loved. Vidyasagar regarded Madan Mohan as if he was his own brother, and always sought for opportunities to do him a good turn. It was mainly through Vidyasagar's exertions that his friend, Madan Mohan, obtained the situation of Head Pandit in the Calcutta Bengali Pathshala. After this, when the latter was acting as Head Pandit of the Barasat Government School, a teacher was required in the Fort William College to teach Hindu Law to the civilians. At the instance of Vidyasagar, Madan Mohan Tarkalankar was appointed to the post on a monthly salary of forty rupees.

Pandit Dyaraka Nath Vidyabhushan *and Girish

* He was born in 1824 at Changripota in the district of 24 Pergunnas. He studied in the Sanskrit College for

Chandra Vidyaratna were two of his friends. At the time of which we are speaking, the post of the Second Teacher of the Grammar class, and that of the Librarian of the Sanskrit College, fell vacant. The salaries attached to the posts were 50 and 30 rupees respectively. Babu Rassomoy Dutt was then the Secretary to the College. There were many candidates for the two situations, and, at the suggestion of Vidyasagar, it was decided upon to hold an examination to fill up the vacancies. At this examination, Dvaraka Nath Vidyabhushan and Giris Chandra Vidyaratna stood first and second respectively. But Rassomoy Babu, for reasons best known to himself, instead of conferring the post of the Second Teacher on Vidyabhushan, precipitately appointed him to the post of the Librarian, Vidyabhushan felt himself aggrieved, and Vidyasagar lost no time in informing Mr. Marshall of the injustice. Mr. Marshall brought the matter to the notice of Dr. Mouett the then secretary to the Educataion Council, Dr. Mouett, overturned Rassomoy Babu's arrangement, and appointed Dvaraka Nath Vidyabhushan as Second Teacher of Grammar, and Giris Chandra Vidyaratna as Librarian.

It may be still fresh in the reader's mind, how through the exertions of Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar,

twelve years. In later years, he set himself up as Editor of the *Soma Prakash*, a renowned Bengali weekly. He had a great intimacy with Vidyasagar.



Vidyasagar as a young man.

then a mere student of the Sanskrit College, Pandit Jay Narayan Tarkapanchanan had been appointed to the post vacated by the death of Nim Chand Siromani. The reader will find many such instances in Vidyasagar's life.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTINUANCE IN THE FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE.

We have stated before, that Mr. Marshall used to read Sanskrit with Vidyasagar, and receive from him lessons in that language. He had already acquired a tolerable knowledge of Bengali, and he preferred to converse with Vidyasagar in that tongue. The latter, therefore, wrote to him letters in Bengali, as occasion needed. One day, he was unable to attend his office on account of the illness of one of his relations living in his house. He informed Mr. Marshall of this, in a letter written in Bengali. Thus by degrees Vidyasagar rose in influence and eminence, while still in the Fort William College.

The more Mr. Marshall came in contact with Vidyasagar, the more was he led to be pleased at the latter's keen intellect, sound knowledge, excellent character, intrepid spirit, dignified manners, and noble generosity. He had a firm trust in whatever Vidyasagar said or did. He never did anything without consulting Vidyasagar. Whenever

Dr. Mouett, the Secretary to the Education council, had a necessity for some information on the Sanskrit Literature or Hindu Religion, he used to go to Mr. Marshall for the information. The latter, in his turn, had the matter decided by reference to Vidyasagar. It was in this way, that Dr. Mouett came to know Vidyasagar, whom he henceforth regarded with much esteem and trust. Gradually he had a great affection for Vidyasagar, and was ever his well-wisher and benefactor.

Shortly after he had entered the Fort William College, Vidyasagar had to witness a great change in the educational policy of this country. He was intimately connected with the education department, and under this department, he had to bring about many alterations, and introduce new plans. We will, therefore, try to notice them briefly.

When Isvar Chandra first entered the Sanskrit College, as a student, in 1829, English education had not much spread in this country. Some respectable residents of Calcutta and its neighbourhood were the first to begin to appreciate English education, and try to introduce it into this country. Through the exertions of Hare, Harrington, East, and some other generous Europeans and a number of influential natives of this country, a school was set up in the premises of Gora Chand Basak of Garanhata on Monday, the 20th of January, 1817. It was the groundwork of the Hindu College of after years. There was also another party who

were in favour of diffusing Sanskrit education throughout the country, and the Government of the time sided with them. But ultimately, on the petition of Raja Ram Mohan Ray, backed by Hare and Wilson, Government altered its former policy and resolved to propagate Western education in this land of the Hindus. After much efforts, a building for the accomodation of the Hindu and Sanskrit Colleges was erected at a cost of one lac and twenty-four thousand rupees on a plot of land presented for the purpose by the well-renowned, munificent David Hare. Hare is no more, but his name will be ever cherished very dearly in the heart of every English-educated Bengali. But for his indefatigable exertions and munificent gifts, the current of education in this country would have taken a very different course. In 1825, the two Colleges were set up in this new building.

Heretofore, the administration of the education department was in the hands of a Committee known by the name of "General Committee of Public Instruction." This committee had been started in 1823. The dispute of the two parties as to whether Western or Eastern education was beneficial to this country, alluded to before, continued for twelve years even after the foundation of this committee. At last, by the decision of Lord Macaulay, the promoters of Western education gained the victory. In the year 1839, Lord Auckland, the then Governor-General of India, declared in his Minute

that English should be the medium of imparting instruction in the Arts, Sciences, and Philosophy of Europe, that the Vernacular Schools already existing in the country should be placed in a more perfect working order, that equal encouragements should be given to the students of English and Vernacular, and that the vernacular languages should be taught along with English.

From this time forward the Committee of Public Instruction began to supervise the working of the new system, and the current of English education began to flow vigorously. The liberty of the Press had already been declared in 1835. The use of Persian as Court language was interdicted in the year 1837. The native judicial officers of the country were entrusted with more powers. Consequently the working of the new system found fresh fields of expansion. The Committee of Public Instruction divided Bengal into nine divisions. A college was started in each of these divisions; and an Anglo-Bengali school was set up in each district of these divisions. In the year 1852, the Committee of Public Instruction made over charge of the education department to a more powerful association, *viz.* "The Education Council". Vidyasagar had to bring about many revisions under this Council, of which hereafter.

While Vidyasagar was employed as a teacher in the Fort William College, Lord Hardinge, the then Governor-General of India, came to visit the

College, one day, on inspection duty, and had a long talk with Vidyasagar on various topics. In course of conversation, Vidyasagar complained of the hard lot of the students of the Sanskrit College. He said that they had now no prospects. The post of *Judge-Pandit*, which had so long been reserved for them, had been abolished. The numerical strength of the College was, in consequence, falling off. It was, therefore, meet and proper, that Government should do something for them. It was finally settled that a number of vernacular schools should be established in the country, and the teachers for these schools should be taken from among the students of the Sanskrit College. 101 such schools were established in the different parts of the country from 1844 to 1846, and they were styled "Hardinge Schools" after the name of their founder. These schools were set up in imitation of Western schools for the propagation of Bengali education, and Vidyasagar was not wholly unconnected with them. He took great pains for their advancement.

The selection of teachers for these schools by examination, and their appointment were intrusted to Mr. Marshall and Vidyasagar. The latter had now to face difficulties of a strange sort. The elderly professors of the Sanskrit College and some other private Pandits turned to be his bitter enemies. The professors grudged his influence with the authorities, that young Vidyasagar was.

charged with the examination of the new teachers in preference to them, who were far superior to him both in age and experience. The other Pandits were highly displeased with him, because merit, and no favour, was his maxim. He gave away the posts to the more worthy candidates. He showed neither favour nor bias. No consideration of any kind, either of friendship, relationship, or recommendation, found place in his conscientious heart. The disappointed Pandits began to indulge in vile slanders of Vidyasagar. But the just and heroic Vidyasagar, who had not shown the slightest favour to the civilians even at the recommendation of Mr. Marshall, his official superior and patron, was not a man to be intimidated, and to lose heart, by such mean slanders and envy. He acted up to the dictates of his own conscience. It was quite against his nature to do any thing which in his judgment, was not right and proper.

Immediately after his appointment in the Fort William College, Vidyasagar's first impulse was to relieve his father from the troubles of his toilsome servitude. Some say, that shortly after he had got his first appointment, his father had an accident on his way to office, and that this led Vidyasagar to urge him to give up his office. But we have no authority on that point. However that might be, Vidyasagar said to his father one day :—'You see, father, I now earn 50 rupees a month, and this would be quite sufficient to cover

our expenses. Why should you then work ? I shall give you 20 rupees every month. Please, go home and enjoy rest.' His father hesitated a little, but, at the earnest importunity of his son, was fain to accede to his terms. He resigned his situation and went to Birsingha, where Vidyasagar used to remit his promised 20 rupees regularly, month after month. The remaining 30 rupees he spent on his house in Calcutta. He had, at this time, his two younger brothers and five cousins living with him, besides a menial servant, by name Sriram, * and by caste, a barber. Of the five cousins, two were sons of his father's brother, two were sons of his father's sister, and the other was a son of his mother's sister. There were thus nine members (including himself) in Calcutta, to maintain with 30 rupees. Besides, several outsiders and visitors had to be fed almost daily. There was no cook in the establishment. All the inmates of his house, not excepting Vidyasagar himself, had, by turns, to do the cooking. Dear reader, do you see wherein Vidyasagar's greatness lay ? He was the master of the house, earning 50 rupees a month. He could indulge in luxuries. He could engage a cook. But he did nothing of the kind. As soon as he had the means

* It is said that after Vidyasagar had removed to Sukea's Street, some of his relations attempted at his life. It was with the help of this devoted, faithful servant that Vidyasagar could then save his life.

at his command, his first impulse was to relieve his parent's troubles. In his childhood he had heard from his father the tales of his early distress. When a student in Calcutta, he had witnessed, with his own eyes, the pains and sufferings of his father. He had seen him remove and cleanse his sons' soil with his own hands. How could then a man of Vidyasagar's character act otherwise than what he did ? What else did he do ? Quite regardless of his own inconvenience, he defrayed the maintenance of distant relations and some other persons wholly unconnected with him, and divided with them equally the domestic works of his household. Was this not greatness of heart ? How many men of means are there now, who would consent to act like Vidyasagar under similar circumstances ?

We have already seen, that while a scholar in the Sanskrit College he showed his kindness of heart by giving food and clothing to the needy, and by succouring the poor and distress, out of his paltry scholarship funds. He was now earning 50 rupees a month, out of which he gave 20 rupees to his father, and reserved the rest for his establishment expenditure in Calcutta. He defrayed the expenses most economically, and what he could thus save out of the 30 rupees, he spent gladly in feeding the hungry and in succouring the distress. In 1843, Gangadhar Tarkavagis, one of the professors of the Sanskrit College, had an attack of Cholera,

No sooner did the news reach Vidyasagar, than he hastened to the spot, accompanied with his friend, Doctor Durga Charan Banarji, of whom mention has been made before. Durga Charan Babu was engaged in the treatment of the patient, and Vidyasagar removed the discharges with his own hands. He paid for the medicines out of his own pocket. Whenever he saw or heard of a poor, helpless man suffering from illness, he hurried to him, and nursed him tenderly, and supplied him with medicines and diet out of his own funds.

On one occasion, Vidyasagar was told that one Isan Chandra Bhattacharya, nephew (sister's son) of Professor Jay Narayan Tarkapanchanan of Narikeldanga, was suffering from Cholera. He presented himself there in the night, and provided for the patient's treatment. He took articles of bedding from his own house, and with them made a comfortable bed for the sufferer. His favourite disciple, Raj Krishna Babu, said to one of his friends :—'He (*i.e.* Vidyasagar) had often to act similarly. It is not possible for me to recollect all the deeds of his unfeigned, disinterested benevolence. They are too many for me to enumerate, and for you to hear patiently. The recollection of the benevolent acts of that incarnation of kindness calls his noble image vividly to mind. The very thought of him rends my heart and makes tears flow down in torrents. Alas ! We shall no more find a man, equal to him in charitableness and kindness.'

On another occasion, a domestic in the employ of a well-to-do householder, who lived in a house in front of Vidyasagar's lodgings, having been seized with Cholera, was sent away by his master and abandoned in the streets. The poor sufferer had no one to look after him, or to give him a drop of water. No sooner did Vidyasagar hear of it, than he hastened to the spot. He carried the unfortunate man on his shoulders to his lodgings, and gently laid him down on his own bed. He placed the poor man under the medical treatment of his friend, Doctor Durga Charan Banarji, paid for his medicines out of his own pocket, and nursed him with great care and tenderness. He thus saved the life of the helpless man, who recovered in a few days. But for his kindness, the unfortunate man must have died in the streets. Gentle reader, was not Vidyasagar a truly great and benevolent man ?

Allusion has already been made of Vidyasagar's disinterested forwardness in securing situations for his friends, relations and acquaintances, of worth and ability. The reader has seen how he secured appointments for Jay Narayan Tarkapanchanan, Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, Dvaraka Nath Vidyabhushan and Girish Chandra Vidyaratna. In this unselfish work of benevolence, he had sometimes to suffer pecuniary losses and even undergo physical pains. While he was still employed in the Fort William College on a salary of 50 rupees, the post of the first teacher of the Grammar class in the

Sanskrit College fell vacant. The post carried a monthly salary of 90 rupees. Here was a great chance of Vidyasagar's own promotion. Dr. Mouett, Secretary to the Education Council, called on Mr. Marshall to consult on the selection of a competent man for the post. Mr. Marshall recommended Vidyasagar. The situation was accordingly offered him, but he declined the offer. The real cause of his refusal was, that he had already given word to the famous professor, Taranath Tarkavachaspati that he would secure him a suitable situation. He knew Tarkavachaspati to be a most worthy man versed in all the different branches of the Sanskrit literature, and he now took this opportunity to fulfil his promise. He recommended Tarkavachaspati to Mr. Marshall, saying that Vachaspati was the best grammarian of the time, which he sincerely believed. This was Saturday, and the appointment was to be made on Monday, Taranath Tarkavachaspati was, at this time, at Kalna, some 50 miles away from Calcutta. The postal system then was not so well organised as at present. There was no railway. A great difficulty now faced Vidyasagar. How was he to inform Tarkavachaspati of this happy news? He could not communicate it by a letter, as it would not reach him in time; and even if it should reach him, what certainty was there, that he would accept the post? Tarkavachaspati had already opened a *Tol* at Kalna, and engaged himself in money-lending busi-

ness. What was Vidyasagar to do now? He was not long in thinking. That very night he started on foot for Kalna, accompanied with a relation of his. They walked the whole night, and at noon of the next day (Sunday), reached Tarkavachaspati's house. Both Vachaspati and his father were wonder-struck, when they heard from Vidyasagar the cause of his advent, and they knew not how to thank him for such disinterested benevolence. When they saw, that he had walked such a long distance in the night, merely to keep his promise, without at all caring for his own interest, they were touched to the very core of their heart, and poured forth their choicest blessings on the young hero's head. They declared in one voice ;—'Glory to you, Vidyasagar ! You are not a man, but a heavenly god in human form.' He started again for Calcutta the same day, on foot as before, with Tarkavachaspati's application and testimonials, leaving his relation behind to return by boat, who was too much exhausted to be able to walk a step farther. But Vidyasagar felt no uneasiness or difficulty. He reached Calcutta the next day (Monday) in time only to be able to hand over Vachaspati's application and testimonials to Mr. Marshall, who in his turn, recommended Tarkavachaspati to Government. In a few days, Vachaspati arrived at Calcutta and received his appointment letter. Vidyasagar was not only a strong man mentally and morally, but physically also. He was a good pedestrian,

Many stories are told of his abilities at pedestrianism. At first sight, these stories seem incredible, but they are as true as anything. It is said, that even in his declining years, when he was quite broken down by ill health, stout and strong young men could not match him in walking. The journey to and from his native village, Birsingha, Vidyasagar performed on foot in one day. In the course of the whole journey, he ate or drank nothing but a raw cocoanut at Masat, a village some 24 miles from Birsingha. Even in later days, when he was Principal of the Sanskrit College, he used to perform the journey on foot, as before. If any of his co-travellers or companions had a load or luggage too heavy, he would divide it with him, and carry it on his own head or shoulders. On one occasion, it so happened, that two *Darwans* (porters) of the Sanskrit College came in his way, and saw him walking with a burden on his head. They were quite surprised at the sight, and offered to carry the load for him. But he dismissed them with kind and gentle words, and went on with the burden.

It is said, that while Vidyasagar was employed in the Sanskrit College, he had unexpectedly a very urgent necessity to return to Calcutta from Birsingha, and make the journey on foot, as usual, in less than one day's time. As he started on his journey, one Madan Mandal, one of his servants, came to him, and expressed his willingness to accompany him. Vidyasagar doubted his ability,

and asked him whether he would be able to walk with him at the same rate. The man replied in the affirmative. They then proceeded on their way. For 9 or 10 miles, Madan Mandal followed Vidyasagar closely, but presently he fell back. He soon saw that his master, had outpassed him nearly 200 yards. Madan Mandal was a *lathial* (clubman). He gave himself and his *lathi* (club) several whirls in the air. He then ran forward as fast as his legs permitted, and was soon at his master's heels. Again they proceeded together. As soon as they reached an inn, 24 miles from Birsingha, Madan Mandal said to his master,—“Let us stay here for this day. We need not go to Calcutta to-day; at which Vidyasagar smiled, and replied,—“I must go to-day. You may put up here for this day, and go to Calcutta to-morrow. Here are some pice to pay your hotel-bill.” With this, he left Madan Mandal to rest at the inn, and reached Calcutta by night-fall.

During his tenure of employment in the Fort William College he found opportunities of visiting Birsingha more frequently. When at home, his main business was to call on, and enquire after his neighbours, attend and nurse the diseased, help and succour the distressed, and divert himself by various athletic sports and amusements. One of his chief amusements at that time was to attend dinner-parties in company with his brothers and other relations. If, on such occasions, a ditch

would lie on his way, he would leap across it by way of sport, and then ask his second brother, Dinabandhu, to follow his example. In trying to do so, Dinabandhu often threw himself down into the ditch, which raised a roar of laughter from the company. Vidyasagar engaged himself in various sportive merriments of this nature with his younger brothers.

It is said, that on one occasion, he was walking to Calcutta, as usual, from Birsingha. When he reached a field, he saw an old cultivator standing there with a load on his head. The load was too heavy for the old man, and the old man was too weak to walk with the load. On enquiry, Vidyasagar learned from him that his house was 5 or 6 miles from the place, and that his son, who was a young man, had charged him to carry the load home. The sight of the poor, old man's condition, and the tale of his son's conduct moved Vidyasagar's kind heart, and tears flowed in torrents from his eyes. He at once took over the load from the old man's head on his own head, and, thus equipped, followed the aged cultivator, with slow steps, to his home. He then retraced his steps, and reached Calcutta rather later than usual.

Whenever there was an occasion of presenting winter-cloth to any body, the charge of purchasing the cloth was intrusted to Babu Braja Nath De, the Superintendent of the Metropolitan Institution.

One day, Vidyasagar said to him,—“You see Braja Nath, whenever there is any necessity for cloth, it is you whom I send to the shawl-merchants.” It does not look well that one man should trouble himself on all occasions with this affair. If you will once show me the shop to-morrow, I may occasionally call at the place and make purchases by myself. Please, come to-morrow, and I will accompany you to the shop.” The next day, Braja Nath Babu made his appearance at the proper time, and both started together for Barabazar, the chief place of native traders, especially cloth-merchants. But Braja Nath Babu was ill at ease to keep pace with Vidyasagar. The latter was always in much advance of the former. Vidyasagar had every now and then to stop on the way to let his follower come up to him. When they were again together for the fourth time, he said to Braja Nath Babu,—‘I have acquired a habit of walking rather a little too fast. My followers, as a rule, cannot keep pace with me. Never mind, Braja Nath, let us do one thing. This time you walk foremost, and I will follow you.’ Braja Nath Babu now felt himself at ease. On the way Vidyasagar warned his friend not to let the merchant know his (Vidyasagar’s) personality. But it was of no avail. As soon as Vidyasagar entered the shop, followed by his friend, the merchant rose from his seat, and received him respectfully, saying,—‘Welcome venerable *Panditji*, good

morning ; surely, I am very fortunate to-day.' Vidyasagar whispered into the ears of his friend, that he wondered how the merchant could identify him. The shrewd, witty merchant replied, that fire must proclaim itself by its heat, even when put under cover.

Even in later years, when he was enfeebled by age and disease, no one could match him in pedestrianism. It is said, that when he was staying at Karmatar for change of climate, he was out one day to take a walking excursion accompanied with some of his friends and a grown-up grandson. The grandson said to him,—‘Let us see, if you can outpace us to-day.’ The feeble grand-father smiled, and said,—‘Very good, let it be so ?’ So saying, he proceeded on his way, and the others followed. Shortly, all others save the grandson fell much behind. Soon afterwards, the grandson saw that his dear grandpapa, with his usual slippers on, had much outpaced him. He tried his best, to overtake him, but could approach him no nearer. The grandfather enjoyed the fun from a distance, and smiled at the futile attempts of his grandson, who was now quite abashed and dumb-founded with amazement.

Dear reader, you see what wonderfully expert walker Vidyasagar was. Was not his strength of body equal to his strength of mind, and his strength of mind equal to his strength of heart ? What happy combination ! How many were or are

there in this world, who were or are endowed with the three strengths in equal proportion ? Very few, we believe. The reader will, by and by, see how strong Vidyasagar was in every respect.

The depth of Vidyasagar's affection for his mother was equal to, if not more than, that for his father. He idolised his mother. We will give the reader an illustration of the strong affection and esteem, he felt for his dear mamma.

One day, when he was working in the Fort William College, information reached him that the marriage of his third brother, Sambhu Chandra, had been settled at Birsingha. In a few days, he received a letter from his mother asking him to be unavoidably present at the nuptials. He was eagerly anxious to obey the command of his mother. He at once called on Mr. Marshall, and applied for leave, but the application was rejected. He was very sorry, and thought within himself thus :—'Mother will miss me very keenly. What pangs she will suffer ! Without me she will be half-dead. How ungrateful I am, not to obey her commands ! What shame ! Fie to me.' After office hours, he returned to his lodgings, and, to his great disappointment, found that the other inmates of his house had already left for Birsingha in accordance with previous arrangements. He was now quite alone, and felt the disappointment very keenly. He sat up the whole night, crying and weeping for his mother. He had not a wink

of sleep that night. The next morning, he resolved that he would renew his application for leave, and that if the leave should be again refused, he would resign his appointment. Go home he must, at all risks. Accordingly, he called again on Mr. Marshall, and renewed his application. With great emphasis he said ; — ‘Sir, if you do not grant me leave to go home, I resign my post. Please, accept my resignation. For the sake of my service, I can not suffer my mother to shed tears.’ Mr. Marshall was wonder-struck at the uncommon feelings of filial devotion. Vidyasagar felt for his mother. He could not utter a single word of protest, but very gladly granted the leave. Vidyasagar at once repaired to his lodgings ; and accompanied with his faithful servant, Sriram, started for Birsingha at 3 P. M. in the afternoon.

This was in the month of July,—the rainy season of tropical Bengal. The sky was overcast, clouds thundering dreadfully with flashes of lightning every now and then, winds roaring incessantly, rains pouring in incessant torrents. The roads were all slippery and muddy. Quite regardless of these, Vidyasagar moved on as fast as his legs permitted, and he was not a slow walker, as the reader is already aware. At night-fall he reached Krishnarampur, and it being too dark to find his way, he was, at his servant’s request, compelled to stay there for the night in an inn. He had still to journey 25 miles, before he could reach his home,

The next morning he rose very early, and proceeded on his way, followed by his servant. When he had travelled some distance, he found that Sriram was quite wearied with fatigue and hunger. The servant's home was not very far from this place. Vidyasagar, therefore, provided for the servant's breakfast in a neighbouring inn, and giving him a few pice, said ;—'Here is some money to pay your hotel-bill; you may now go home. With this, he left him, and ran on like an arrow. Sriram could no more follow him, and was obliged to go to his own home. Vidyasagar soon reached the banks of the Damodar.

The river Damodar was very wide, and full to its brinks on both sides, and there was a very strong current flowing. In the dry season, the water in the Damodar is very shallow, and the river is fordable in many places; but during the rains, the water swells to its banks, and sometimes overflows them. Vidyasagar saw, that the river was not only full to its brinks, but also rough and turbulent, with a strong current flowing vigorously. The ferry boat was, unfortunately, on the other side of the river. What was Vidyasagar to do now? What means would he adopt to cross the river? He was not long in thinking. He was now inspired with a heavenly animation,—an eager longing to see his dear mother. In the name of God and his mother, he plunged precipitately into the stream. He swam across the river,

and reached the other bank safe, What a good swimmer ! He then proceeded on his way with running speed, and was soon on the banks of the Dvarakesvar. Here was the same difficulty again. The river was as swollen and turbulent as the Damodar. There was no ferry boat. He was now quite exhausted. He had nothing to eat the whole day. But he did not care for all this. He was animated with divine inspiration. He plunged into the river, and with God's grace, who is ever ready to help those that help themselves, swam across safely to the other side. He now ran apace, for it was growing dark. When he came to the *Kuran-Khal*, the sun had already set, and it was quite dark. The place was very dreadful. It was notorious as the chief haunt of robbers, who lay in wait, concealed under some covert, and as opportunity presented itself, fell on and plundered wayfarers, occasionally killing them. But Vidyasagar had no room in his mind for fear or anything of the kind, save the thought of his mother. He proceeded on fearlessly, and when he reached home, it was past nine O'clock in the night. He found, that the marriage procession had already left for the bride's. He looked for his mother, but could not find her, for she had shut the doors of her room, and lay there weeping for her dear child. Vidyasagar called aloud ; - "Mamma, where are you, mamma, I am come." The mother knew her son's voice, and

instantly ran out and clasped him in her arms, and pressed kisses on his forehead. Then mother and child both fell a-crying. When the outbursts of their feeling had somewhat subsided, they sat down to their meals. None of them had eaten any food that day till then.

The reader has, no doubt, heard and read many anecdotes of children's love for their mothers. The affectionate, filial devotion of Napoleon, Washington, Johnson, and some other great men are reputed to be unparalleled in the annals of history. But, sweet reader, can you conscientiously say, that the filial love of any of these men could approach the filial love of this poor Indian? We think, not. It is said of Julius Cæsar that when, with a view to conquer England, he had shipped his army, and was ready to weigh anchor, a great storm arose, threatening to sink all his ships laden with the army and himself. Every one of his followers importuned him not to dare his valuable life, and tried to dissuade him, but he heeded them not. When Vidyasagar was about to plunge into the Damodar, some men, who were working in the neighbouring fields, tried to dissuade him from his attempts, which they considered to be nothing but rash and foolish. There is a good deal of similarity between the acts of these two great men. Both were heroes, though of different sorts. Both risked their valuable lives, the one for conquest of another's kingdom, and the other,

for worship of his own mother. May we now ask you, dear reader, which of the two was the nobler hero? Which of the two was more admirable? Which of the two should have his name engraved in our hearts? Which of the two ought to be our model for imitation? We leave the thoughtful reader to answer the questions for himself. This is only one illustration of Vidyasagar's filial love. The reader will, by and by, find many such instances in his life.

Before concluding this chapter, we will once more notice his powers of versification. We have seen his abilities at composition of beautiful Sanskrit poems, when a student,—winning prizes for them. In his maturer years those powers had not lost their vigour. His abilities at versification were always the same. But, unfortunately, he did not cultivate them. During his tenure of office in the Fort William College, Mr. Cost, a Civilian, requested Vidyasagar to compose a *sloka* (a very short stanza) about him. Vidyasagar composed the *sloka* extemporaneously. Mr. Cost had some knowledge of Sanskrit, and he thought the *sloka* beautiful. He admired it, and was so pleased, that he at once offered him a reward of 200 rupees. Vidyasagar would not take the money himself. He proposed that the money should be deposited in the Sanskrit College, and out of it a prize of 50 rupees should be given each year to the best Sanskrit essayist. Mr. Cost agreed to Vidyasagar's

proposal, and the money was funded accordingly. Vidyasagar was thus the means of awarding four prizes to four pundits of his country, thereby encouraging the culture of Sanskrit composition.

These prizes were called Cost-prizes, after the name of the donor. What disinterested self-sacrifice! Vidyasagar was never known to have any greed of gain. On the contrary, it is well known that in many cases, when he had good opportunities of getting money, Vidyasagar, poor as he was, instead of receiving the money himself, gladly provided for the award of that money, however large the amount might be, to some other person or persons. He had such greatness of heart. It was for this, that respectable Europeans cherished a great esteem for Vidyasagar.

We will notice here briefly, in passing, another instance of his self-sacrifice, in connection with one of the Cost-prizes.

Vidyasagar was appointed examiner of the Cost-prize essays. At the second year's examination for this prize, the essays of one Srischandra Vidyaratna and Dinabandhu Nyayratna, Vidyasagar's younger brother, were superior to the others. The style and diction of both the essays were beautiful. In Srischandra's essay there were a few grammatical mistakes, but in that of Dinabandhu there was none. But Dinabandhu had a great misfortune in that his elder brother, Vidyasagar, was charged with the examination of

the papers. Though Dinabandhu's essay was the best in every respect, he did not get the prize. It was awarded to Srischandra Vidyaratna. The chief cause of this seeming injustice was, that Vidyasagar feared, that if he should award the prize to Dinabandhu, people might think, though unjustly, that when the two essays were of equal quality, Vidyasagar had shown undue favour to his brother. He was also afraid that when he was indirectly interested in the affair, he might unconsciously have been biassed on his brother's side. But, in fact, there was no cause of fear in that respect, as it was universally known that he had weighed the balance evenly. Anyhow, Vidyasagar judged it best to be on the safe side, and he sacrificed self for the sake of another. What a brilliant example of noble self-sacrifice !

When Mr. Cost passed the vernacular examination, he was posted in the Punjab, where he worked as a civilian for many years. Subsequently when he retired from the service, and was about to return home, he came to Calcutta, and paid a visit to Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar. In course of conversation, he recalled Vidyasagar's powers of versification, and asked him to compose a few *slokas* about himself. Vidyasagar then and there wrote five beautiful, sweet *slokas*. Mr. Cost was highly delighted, and thanked him profusely.

There can be no doubt that Vidyasagar's powers of writing Sanskrit prose and poetry were

equally great. But he never cultivated those powers. He devoted himself to the cultivation of his mother language. Yet, he now and then composed Sanskrit verses at leisure. He wrote several elegant poems on "Travel", "Contentment", "Anger", "Cloud" and some other subjects. He composed 408 *slokas* on *Salmalidvip*, *Kusadvip*, *Sakadvip*, and other names of countries according to the ancient *Pauranic* geography of the Hindus, and on America, England, France, Africa and Asia, modern names according to the Westerners. He also wrote brief annotations on *Uttara-Charita*, *Meghduta* and *Sakuntala*. It is not known whether, after this, he made any more attempts at Sanskrit composition, either prose or poetry. When writing the annotations on *Meghaduta*, he remarked, one day, with a smile, to one of his grandsons, who was sitting by ;—'You see, my dear, I have written very good Sanskrit, indeed !' But this was merely a joke, as he had been heard to observe on many occasions, that in this age of degeneration, it was not possible for any one to write good Sanskrit,

CHAPTER IX.

HIS FIRST BENGALI WORK, "THE VASUDEVA-CHARITA."

Shortly after he had entered into the service of the Fort William College, Vidyasagar was asked by the authorities of the institution to write good,

readable books in Bengali prose for the use of the students of the College, who were European would-be civilians, as the reader has already been told. In compliance with this request, he wrote the "Vasudeva Charita." It was compiled from the *Srimadbhagabata*, a religious book of the Hindus in Sanskrit. It was not exactly a *verbatim* translation throughout. Some portions of the original were left out altogether, here and there the sense only was taken, and only a portion of the original text was literally translated. Considering the nice style, choice diction, and beautiful, easy, flowing language of the "Vasudeva-Charita", it must be said, that it very nearly approaches an original composition. It may be taken as a good model of Bengali prose. Unfortunately for the Hindu readers of Bengal, the "Basudeva Charita" was not approved of by the authorities of the Fort William College, and was, therefore, not published. The book treats of *Sri-Krishna*, trying to demonstrate him to be a bodily incarnation of the Supreme Deity.

In the Vasudeva-Charita, the *lilas* (sports) of Sri Krishna have been fully described. Every page, nay every line, of the book has been devoted to divine manifestation. Vidyasagar of course thought, that though the book treated of Sri Krishna as an incarnation of God, the authorities would not hesitate to accept it as a text book for the Civilians, on the consideration that it was only a translation, and not an original composition. To say the truth,

although the work was the fruit of Vidyasagar's first attempts at Bengali composition, yet it was undoubtedly a good, readable book for the Bengali-reading Civilians, on account of its beauty of style, sweetness of language, perspicuity of expression, and proper arrangement of thoughts. Prior to this, no Bengali book in prose had ever been written in such chaste, correct, easy, idiomatic language. No doubt, many Sanskrit pundits had, before this, written books in Bengali prose for the use of the students of the Fort William College, but none of them were worth reading. On the contrary, most of them were not at all readable for the worthlessness of their language. Several of the Vernacular teachers of the Fort William College had also compiled Bengali books for the use of the College students. Of these Babu Ramram Basu had written the "Pratapaditya-Charita," a prose work, its language was quite worthless. Pandit Mrityunjay Vidyalkar had written the "Prabodha-Chandrika." In addition to these, Mr. Cary, a European Christian missionary, had compiled an Anglo-Bengali grammar and dictionary. The grammar is now rare, but the dictionary is still extant. Besides the above, there were many Bengali prose books written by other authors contemporaneously with, or prior to, the "Vasudeva-Charita," but none of them could approach it in elegance of style, correctness of language, or sweetness of expression. To enable the reader to form some idea of

the chaste, beautiful language of the book, we crave indulgence to quote below some portions of it from the original manuscript :—

“এক দিবস দেবর্ষি নারদ মথুরায় আসিয়া কংসকে কহিলেন, মহারাজ ! তুমি নিশ্চিন্ত রহিয়াছ, কোনও বিষয়ের অহুস্ধান কর না ; এই বাবু গোপী ও যাদব দেখিতেছে, ইহারা দেবতা, দৈত্যবধের নিমিত্ত ভূমণ্ডলে জন্ম লইয়াছে এবং গুনিয়াছি, দেবকীর গর্ভে জন্মগ্রহণ করিয়া নারায়ণ ! তোমার প্রাণসংহার করিবেন, এবং তোমার পিতা উগ্রসেন এবং অন্ত্যস্ত জ্ঞাতি-বান্ধবেরা তোমার পক্ষ ও হিতাকাঙ্ক্ষী নহেন ; অতএব, মহারাজ ! অতঃপর সাবধান হও, অদ্যাপি সময় অতীত হয় নাই, প্রতীকার চিন্তা কর । এই বলিয়া দেবর্ষি প্রস্থান করিলেন । কংস শুনা অভিশয় কুপিত হইল এবং তৎক্ষণাৎ সপুত্র বহুদেব-দেবকীকে আনাইয়া তাঁহাদিগের সমক্ষে পুত্রের প্রাণনাশ করিল এবং তাঁহাদিগকে কারাগারে নিগড়-বন্ধনে রাখিল । অনন্তর নিজ পিতা উগ্রসেনকে দূরীকৃত করিয়া স্বয়ং রাজ্য-শাসন ও প্রজা পালন করিতে লাগিল এবং এলখ, বক, চামুর, তৃণাবর্ত প্রভৃতি দুর্ভেদ নৈঋতগণের সহিত পরামর্শ করিয়া যদুবংশীয়দের উপরি নানাপ্রকার অত্যাচার করিতে লাগিল । তাহার প্রাণভয়ে পলাইয়া কুরু, কেকয়, শাখ, পাঞ্চাল, বিদর্ভ, নিষধ আদি নানা দেশে প্রচ্ছন্নবেশে বাস করিতে লাগিলেন । কেহ কেহ কংসের শরণাপন্ন ও মতানুযায়ী হইয়া মথুরাতেই অবস্থান করিলেন ।

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অনন্তর অষ্টম মাস পূর্ণ হইলে ভাদ্র মাসের কৃষ্ণপক্ষে অষ্টমীর অর্ধরাত্রি সময়ে ভগবান ত্রিলোকনাথ দেবকীর গর্ভ হইতে আবির্ভূত হইলেন । তৎকালে দিক্ সকল প্রসন্ন হইল, গগনমণ্ডলে নির্ঝল নক্ষত্রমণ্ডল উদ্ভিত হইল, গ্রামে নগরে নানা মঙ্গল-বাদ্য হইতে লাগিল । নদীতে নির্ঝল জল ও সরোবরে কমল প্রফুল্ল হইল । বন উপবন প্রভৃতি মধুর মধুকর-গীতে ও কোকিলকলকলে আমোদিত হইল ; এবং শীতল শৃগলি বন্য বন্য পশুবহু বহিতে লাগিল । সাধুগণের আশ্রয় ও জলাশয় স্মরণ হইল ।

দেবলোকে ছন্দুতি-ধ্বনি হইতে লাগিল। সিদ্ধ চারণ ভিন্নর গন্ধর্বগণ
গীতি ও স্তুতি করিতে লাগিল। বিদ্যাধরীগণ অঙ্গরাদিগের সহিত নৃত্য
করিতে লাগিল। দেব ও দেবর্ষিগণ হর্ষিতমনে পুষ্পার্ঘ্য করিতে লাগিল।
মেঘসকল মন্দ মন্দ গর্জন করিতে লাগিল।”

Such easy, chaste Bengali, as is found in Vidyasagar's "Vasudeva-Charita," is not generally to be met with in any other book written by Sanskrit pundits save Vidyasagar himself. It cannot, therefore, be said that those, who have a knowledge of Sanskrit, must invariably write good Bengali. Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra, and Rev. K. M. Banarji had a considerable knowledge of the Sanskrit language. They made no small amount of attempts for the culture and development of the Bengali prose. They rendered no inconsiderable extent of help for the improvement of the Bengali language. For this, their names ought to be respectfully cherished in the memory of every native of Bengal, equally with that of Vidyasagar. But even the language of these notable authors could not approach that of Vidyasagar in easy flow, chasteness, correctness, and elegance of style.

Raja Ram Mohan Ray had died at Bristol on the 27th September, 1833, at the age of 61, when Vidyasagar was still a scholar in the Sanskrit College. Raja Rajendra Lala Mitra and Rev. K. M. Banarji, devoted themselves to the cultivation and development of the Bengali language, contemporaneously with Vidyasagar. Both of them

were well versed in English. K. M. Banarji had forsaken the religion of his fathers, and converted himself a Christian. The devotion of these two men to Bengali is really admirable. K. M. Banarji died in 1884, at the good old age of 85 years, and Rajendra Lala Mitra died in 1891, at the age of 70. For some time Vidyasagar and Rajendra Lala had been intimately and closely connected ; but after a review by Vidyasagar of the working of the "Wards' Institution," of which Rajendra Lala was superintendent, they separated. Vidyasagar had only a familiar acquaintance with K. M. Banarji, but they were not intimate friends. For the sake of ready reference and comparative review of the language of these writers, we will quote a little from each of them.

Ram Mohan Ray was the author of the "Pautalikdiger Dharmapranali," "Vedanter Anuvad," "Kathopanishad," "Bajasaneya Sanghitopanishad," "Mandukyopanishad," "Pathya-Pradan," and some other books. Here is a specimen of his language from the "Pathya-Pradan" :—

“বাস্তবিক ধর্মসংহারক অথচ ধর্ম সংস্থাপনাকাজী নাম গ্রহণ পূর্বক যে প্রচাৰিত্র প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন, তাহা সমুদয়ে দুই শত অষ্টাভিংশং পৃষ্ঠা সংখ্যক হয়, তাহাতে দশ পৃষ্ঠা পরিমিত ভূমিকা গ্রন্থরস্তুে লিখেন। এ দশ পৃষ্ঠে গণনা করা গেল যে ব্যঙ্গ ও নিন্দাত্মক শব্দ ভিন্ন স্পষ্ট করুজি বিংশতি শব্দ হইতে অধিক আমাদের প্রতি উল্লেখ করিয়াছেন,—এইরূপ সমগ্র পুস্তক আর দুর্বাক্যে পরিপুষ্ট হয়। ইহাতে এই উপলব্ধি হইতে পারে যে যেসব ও মৎসরতার কাঁচর হইয়া ধর্ম-সংহারক শাস্ত্রীয় বিবাদচ্ছলে

এইরূপ কটুক্তি প্রয়োগ করিয়া অসংকরণের ক্ষোভ নিবারণ করিতেছেন অন্যথা ছন্দাকা প্রয়োগ বিনা শাস্ত্রীয় বিচার সঙ্গত ছিল।”

K. M. Banarji wrote the “Shad-Darsan Sang-graha”, “Vidyakalpadrum”, and some other works in Bengali. We give below a specimen of his style from his “Vidyakalpadrum” :—

“এতদ্দেশের প্রাচীন ইতিহাস পুস্তকে অনেক অনেক নরপতি ও বীরদিগের দেবপুত্ররূপে বর্ণনা আছে, ইহাতে বোধ হয় পুরাকালীন লোক-দের সভ্যতাপেক্ষা অল্পতম বিবরণে অধিক আদর ছিল এবং পুরাণ লেখকেরা কবিতার ছন্দোললিত্যাদির প্রতি অনুরক্ত হইয়া শব্দনিষ্ঠাস করত পাঠক-বর্গের মনোরঞ্জন পুরাসর বিবিধ বিষয়ে উপদেশ করিতে প্রতিজ্ঞা করিয়াছিলেন, সুতরাং আকল ইতিবৃত্ত লিখিয়া স্ব স্ব কল্পনা-শক্তিকে খর্ব করেন নাই। বাক্য ও গদ্যভরের রসে রসিক হইয়া স্ব স্ব কবিত্ব ও নৈপুণ্য প্রকাশপূর্বক সাধারণের মস্তেব করিয়া উল্লিখিত শূরদীর রাজাদিগের নানের গৌরব করিবেন, তাঁহাদিগের ইহাট বিশেষ তাৎপর্য্য ছিল।”

Rajendra Lala Mitra wrote and edited the “Bibidhartha-Sangraha”, a Bengali monthly paper. In this periodical he displayed his vast knowledge and faculties of inquisitive research, and, at the same time, made admirable attempts for the development of his mother language. As a specimen of his style of composition, we quote below a portion from his magazine.

“পরন্তু এতদ্দেশীয় মহাশয় জনসকল যদি একত্র হওত ঈশদমুগ্রহাবলোকন করিয়া স্বদেশীয় মঙ্গলবৃদ্ধির উৎসাহ জন্মাইবার ইচ্ছা করেন, তাহা হইলে নানা উপায় দ্বারা তদন্তীষ্ট সিদ্ধ হইতে পারে। ভদ্র ভদ্র স্থানে অথবা গ্রামে গ্রামে সর্ব সাধারণের সার্বকালিক বংশপরম্পরার উপকারার্থে গ্রামভেটি ও নগরইয়ারির ধন অথবা তত্তত্যা প্রত্যেক ব্যক্তি কিকিৎ কিকিৎ মাসিক দান দ্বারা এক প্রস্থালয় স্থাপন করিলে কোন ব্যক্তির ব্যয় ক্ষেপ

হইবেনা, অথচ অতুল উপকার । গ্রন্থের অভাব প্রযুক্ত অনেকে নানা শাস্ত্রালেচনা যোগ্য হইয়াও স্বয়ং গ্রন্থসংগ্রহে অপারকবোধে আলোচনা হস্তে পতিত হন । অনেকের ইতিহাস ও ভূগোলবৃত্তান্ত শ্রবণে ও পঠনে স্বতই ইচ্ছা জন্মে, কিন্তু তাদৃশ গ্রন্থাদির সন্ধানপ্রযুক্ত নিরর্থক ভৌতিক ও নাস্ত্রিক গল্পজল্পনাতে কালযাপন করেন ।

“আমরা পল্লীগ্রামবাসী জনের প্রতি অনর্ধাঘ্নিত হইয়া দুর্দল পরামর্শ-পক্ষের উল্লেখ করিতেছি ; কিন্তু তাহাই যে সর্বত্রেরই রীতি হউক এমত আমাদের অভিমত নহে ।

“এতদ্রূপ ভদ্র ধানঢা পল্লীগ্রাম অনেক আছে, যে তাহাতে প্রতিবৎসর মিথ্যা কর্ণোপলক্ষে অনেক ব্যক্তি শত শত টাকার বাক্সদ পোড়াইয়া ক্ষণিক আনন্দ করেন, মিথ্যা সং নির্মাণ করিয়া কত শত মুদ্রা ব্যয় করেন । এমন সকল গ্রামে এক একটি উত্তম গ্রন্থালয় না থাকা তত্তদ্ গ্রামস্থ ব্যক্তিদিগের কি পয়ঃ নিশ্চয় তাহা তাহারাই বিবেচনা করিয়া দেখুন ।”

The works of these notable authors surely teach us many substantial, important things, and they are mostly free from grammatical errors ; but there can be no doubt that their language is somewhat unintelligible for want of perspicuity and plainness. On account of the unusual lengthiness of their sentences, and improper, confused arrangement of expressions, their language has failed to be melodious and attractive. In trying to imitate the English manner of expression, it has become difficult to understand.

Of these three, the language of Ram Mohan Ray is hardly intelligible ; while that of Rajendra Lal Mitra is somewhat better, but less intelligible than that of K. M. Banarji, whose language is plainer than that of the other two, though not

very easy to understand. In Vidyasagar's "Vasudeva-Charita" and other subsequent works, there is an abundant use of long compound words and sentences in imitation of Sanskrit, but these words and sentences have been so nicely and properly chosen and arranged, that they never read harsh or jarring. On the contrary, they sound in the ear like sweet, harmonious music, and reach the very core of the heart, making it dance in merriment. Although his manner of expression is not much varied, yet it is not dully monotonous. It must be admitted, that he had a great command over his language. He could elevate or lower it at pleasure, according to the seriousness or otherwise of his subject. The use of useless or meaningless words is hardly to be found in his writings. He applied his epithets with distinctness and certainty. He used his words with such precision and adaptability to the subject of discourse, that it is very difficult to replace them by other words and sentences without marring the exact meaning intended to be conveyed by them. Even his first book, the "Vasudeva-Charita", abounds with illustrations of this wonderful power of Vidyasagar.

We have already noticed, that before Vidyasagar was made to write his "Vasudeva-Charita", many other writers had written books in Bengali prose, and attempted at the development of the language. Cary, Marshman, and some other notable Christian missionaries were among their

number. But every reader of Bengali knows that they did not fully succeed in their attempts. A specimen of the Bengali prose as written by the missionaries is given below :—

“এক বড় বিলেতে অনেক বেঙ্গের বসতি ছিল । তাহার ধারে কতক-
গুলি বালক হঠাৎ খাপরা খেলা খেলিতে লাগিল, আর জলে একতাই
খাপরাবুটি করিতে লাগিল ; ইহাতে ক্ষীণ ও ভীত বেঙ্গেনের বড় দুঃখ
হইল । শেষে সকল হইতে সাহসী এক বেঙ্গ বিল হইতে উপরে মূখ
বাড়াইয়া কহিল, হে শ্রিয় বালকেরা ! তোমরা এত দূরতেই কেন আপন
জাতির নিষ্ঠুর স্বভাব শিক্ধ ?”

The above extract clearly shows, that the language is comparatively easier, but the ideas have been taken from English. The manner of expression is also in imitation of English. What more can be expected from the pen of a foreigner ?

Besides Carey, Marshman, and other missionaries, many European civilians and talented natives of Bengal made admirable attempts at the development of the Bengali language. They wrote and published many books, newspapers, and periodicals in Bengali. Newspapers and periodicals will be dealt with afterwards. Here we will confine ourselves to the discussion of some of the earlier books, that had helped the growth of the Bengali language, and, by comparison, try to show the immense superiority of Vidyasagar's composition.

In 1778, Halhead, a European Civilian, published a Bengali grammar. At that time, there was no printing press in this country. Charles Wilkins, a friend of Halhead's, cut out the Bengali

letters on wood, and then moulded from them a set of types, with his own hands. Halhead's grammar was then printed with these types. In 1793, Forster, a European, translated into Bengali all the law-books, which had been collected by the then Governor-general, Lord Cornwallis. In 1799, Marshson, Ward and some other Christian missionaries settled down at Serampore, and set up a printing press there. They formed and prepared Bengali, Dev-Nagri and other vernacular types; and, with these, they printed Bengali, Sanskrit, Hindi, Uriya and other vernacular versions of the Bible. Kirttiabas's *Ramayan*, Kasidas's *Mahabharat*, and some other ancient Bengali works also were printed at this press, and sold at a cheap price.

It is very difficult to trace the origin of Bengali prose. We have come across a Bengali book nearly 300 years old. The language of the book, though neither vigorous nor harmonious, clearly shows that Bengali prose must have been born at a much earlier date, though it is very difficult now to trace that exact date. As a specimen of its language, we quote below an extract from the book :—

“তাহার রূপ কি। স্বরূপ প্রকৃতিতে জড়িত। বাহ্যজ্ঞান রহিত।
 তেঁহ নিস্তা চৈতন্য। তাহাকে জানিব কেমনে। তেঁহ আপনাকে আপনি
 জানান। যে জন চৈতন সেই চৈতন্য। অতএব স্বরূপ রূপ এক বস্তু
 হয়। বর্তমান অমৃতমান এই দুইরূপ। * * *। তাহার নাম কি।
 নগ্ন বর্ণ নগ্ন পাতাল কি কি। ভুলোক ভালোক সুরলোক মহালোক

জনলোক ভপলোক শান্তলোক এই সপ্ত বর্গ। * * । তেঁহ প্রথম
পুরুষ । তার নাসাঞে ব্রহ্মাণ্ডের উৎপত্তি ।*

The extract shows that the language had not attained much perfection. The full development and perfection, or otherwise, of a language is determined by the proper use and arrangement of adjectives, adverbs, verbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and other particles. It will be seen in the extract quoted above, that no attention has been bestowed on that point. The author of the book was Narottam Das. It is a booklet of eight pages dealing, in catechism form, with some principles of the Hindu Scripture. From the use of the word “তেঁহ” in the Nominative case, it may be inferred that it was written in the time of Chaitanya, or a little after that. However that might be, even taking it for granted, that this was the period of the birth of the Bengali language, it may be safely said, that English prose cannot boast of being much older.

Sir John Mandeveille is known to the literary world to be the father of English prose literature. * His era has been determined to be between 1300 and 1371 A. D. The previous writings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries cannot be taken into account as forming parts of the English Literature. If we compare the structure of Mandeveille's language with that of modern English side by side,

* William Minto's Manual of English Prose Literature; p. 183.

we find that the former bears to the latter much less similarity than what the structure of Narottam Das bears to that of modern Bengali. To say that Mandeveille's language is as distinct from modern English, as *Prakrita* is from modern Bengali or Hindi, is no exaggeration. To illustrate this we give below a specimen of Mandeveille's language :—

“And zee schulle understonde that I have put this Voke out of Latyn into Frensche, and translated it azen out of Frensche into Englysche, that very man of my Nacioun understonde it,”

The structure of Narottam Das's language does not appear to be very different from that of modern Bengali, though the mode of composition and style are widely different. Mandeveille's language seems to be in its early infancy, rocking in its cradle ; while Narottam Das's language appears to be in its first state of childhood, lisping broken words. But the actual commencement of the progress of the Bengali prose towards development must be dated so late as 1800 A. D., or a little before that.

Although the Bengali prose literature may thus claim to be much older in age than the English prose, there can be no doubt, that the former is much younger and inferior to the latter in gradual development and progress. The Bengali prose has not had its development like the English. When we review the works of such English authors as appeared between the fourteenth and the nineteenth centuries, we find that the process of gradual

development and progress of the English prose literature has been a most wonderful thing. No doubt, the spread of England's trade and extension of its territories have rendered much help in this direction, yet there is still another more prominent cause of its so rapid a progress. It had a very good model before its eyes. The French prose literature was the best model it could have. Want of freedom and poverty of the Bengalees are great obstacles to the development and progress of their national language. The decrease of an eager desire for a knowledge of Bengali, on the part of the natives of the country, generated by the predominant influence of English, and want of good models are among other very powerful obstacles. No doubt, English is, at present, a good model, but it also serves to make the Bengali literature impregnated with foreign ideas and notions, a state of things not at all desirable. It is, therefore, that we think that the perfect development of the Bengali literature is still in the womb of the distant future. Nevertheless, it is a happy sign, that it is on its way of progress, and not quite at a stand-still.

It is quite impossible, in the short space at our disposal, to review all the books, that had been written before the "Vasudeva-Charita", and to discuss at length the gradual development and progress of the Bengali literature. Those who are interested in the matter, and want to have an insight into it are requested to refer to Yates' "Introduction to

Bengali Language." Specimens from the writings of almost all the Bengali authors, who appeared between 1800 and 1840, have been given by Yates in his valuable book.

Had Yates been living now, he would have been glad to find that the cause of his sad disappointment, which he expressed in his invaluable work, has been removed to some extent, though not fully. To be able to determine the gradual development and progress of a language, it is necessary to review its oldest literature. But, unfortunately, the small compass at our command, will not permit us to enter into a detailed discussion of that sort. Besides, an elaborate discussion of the subject may be disagreeable to the reader. We will, therefore, content ourselves with referring to only a few of the older books in Bengali prose.

Reference has already been made to the translations of the law-books by Forster. To satisfy the curiosity of the reader, we give below a specimen of Forster's Bengali from his own translations :—

“২ ধারা ইশতেহার নামার ১ প্রথম দফা। হুবেজাত বাঙ্গালা ও বেহার ও উড়িষ্যার মোতালক করসম্পর্কীয় সমস্ত ভূমির ১০ দশ সনৌ বন্দোবস্তের নিমিত্ত যে সকল আইন ইঙ্গরেজী ১৭৮৯ সালের ১৮ সেপ্টেম্বর ও ২৫ নবেম্বর এবং ইঙ্গরেজী ১৭৯০ সালের ১০ ফিবরেজরীতে নির্দিষ্ট হইয়াছে তদনুসারে ভূমাধিকারি দিগেরে জানান বাইতেছে যে, যে সকল অধিকারি ঐ সকল আইনের মতে আপনাদিগের ভূমির বন্দোবস্ত স্বয়ং কিংবা আপনাদিগের পক্ষের লোকদিগের দ্বারা সরকারে করিবেক তাহাদিগের ভূমির যে নোকররী জমার ধাণ্য ঐ বন্দোবস্তের কালে হইবেক তাহা বিলায়তের কর্তৃকর্তা নাহেব

দিগের মঞ্জুর হইলে দশ সমের পরেও অস্থির ও কেরফার না হইয়া চিরকাল স্থিরতর ও বৃহাল রহিবেক ইতি ।”

The next noticeable book is the “Tota-Itihas.” It is a translation of an Urdu book, the “Tota-Kahini”. The “Tota-Itihas” was compiled by Chandi Charan Munshi, a native of Bengal, but the book was printed in London in 1825. The work seems to have been compiled some time before its publication. The reader will be surprised to hear, that Bengali books were printed in England even before 1825. The “Krishna-Chandra-Charita” was printed in London so far back as 1811. Is it not strange that Bengali types were introduced into England, and Bengali proof-sheets could be corrected there so early? However, to revert. The “Tota-Itihas” deals with certain topics in the form of stories, narrated by a parrot. There is a similar book in Hindi, titled the “Suka-Bahattari.” The language of the “Tota-Itihas”, although written by a Bengali, is much similar to that of the European Christian Missionaries. It is full of provincialisms, and impregnated with foreign ideas and notions. The mixture of provincialisms with purely Sanskrit words has made it harsh and jarring, though the words are plain and easy. The style is neither elegant, nor idiomatic and correct. A specimen of the language is given below :—

“পূর্বকালে ধনবানদের মধ্যে আমদ-হুলতান নামে এক জন ছিলেন ; তাঁহার প্রচুর ধন ঐশ্বর্য্য এবং বিস্তর সৈন্য-সামন্ত ছিল ; একসময় অশ্ব শকণ্ড হস্তী নবশত উষ্ট্র ভারের সহিত তাঁহার দ্বারে হাজির থাকিত ।

কিছু তাঁহার সন্তানসন্ততি ছিল না। এই কারণ তিনি দিবারাত্রি ও
 প্রাতে ও সন্ধ্যাতে ঈশ্বরপূজকদের নিকট পয়স করিয়া সেবার দ্বারা সন্তা-
 নের বর প্রার্থনা করিতেন। কতক দিবস পরে ভগবান সৃষ্টিকর্তা স্বর্গের
 নায়ক বদন চন্দ্রের ন্যায় কপাল অতি স্নান এক পুত্র তাহাকে দিলেন।
 আমদ হুলতান ঐ সন্তান পাইয়া বড় প্রফুল্লিতচিত্ত পুষ্পবৎ বিকসিত হইয়া
 সেই নগরস্থ প্রধান লোক আর মন্ত্রী ও পণ্ডিত এবং শিক্ষাভক্ষ আর ককির-
 দিগকে আহ্বানপূর্বক আনয়ন করিয়া বহুমূল্য খেলাং বস্ত্রাদি দিলেন।
 যখন সেই বালকের সপ্তম বৎসর বয়ঃক্রম হইল তখন আমদ হুলতান
 একজন বিদ্বান লোকের স্থানে পড়িবার জন্যে সেই পুত্রকে সমর্পণ
 করিলেন। কতক দিবসেতে সেই বালক আরবী ও পারস্যী শাস্ত্রের সমুদয়
 পুস্তক পড়িয়া সমাপ্ত করিয়া রাজসভায় ধারামতে কথোপকথন আর বদন
 উঠন শিক্ষা করিলেন। তার পর রাজার আর সভাস্থ লোকদের
 পদসম্মেতে উৎকৃষ্ট হইলেন।”

Ramram Basu's "Lipimala" was published in 1802. The book deals with all its topics in corres-
 pondence form. The language of the book is
 almost similar to that of the "Tota-Itihas," It is
 rather more refined, though wanting in plainness.
 Here is a specimen :—

“তোমাদিগের মঙ্গলাদি সমাচার অনেক দিবস পাই নাই, তাহাতেই
 ভাবিত আছি; সমাচার বিশেষরূপ লিখিবা। চিরকাল হইল তোমার
 খুল্লতাত গঙ্গা পৃথিবীতে আগমন হেতু সমাচার প্রাপ্ত করিয়াছিলেন, তখন
 তাহার বিশেষণ প্রাপ্ত হইতে পারেন নাই।”

In 1804, appeared the "Rajabali." It is a brief
 record of some Hindu and Mussulman kings. For
 want of close connection of the different parts of
 the sentences, the language is harsh and jarring,
 though more developed than the former. We give
 below a specimen of the language :—

“শকাদিত্য পাহাড়ী রাজার অর্থ ব্যবহার শুনিয়া উজ্জয়িনীর রাজা বিক্রমাদিত্য সসৈন্তে দিল্লীতে আসিয়া শকাদিত্য রাজার সহিত যুদ্ধ করিয়া তাহাকে যুদ্ধে জয় করিয়া আপনি দিল্লীতে সম্রাট্ হইলেন। * * * এক দিবস ধাররাজ বিক্রমাদিত্যকে ও ভর্তৃহরিকে আপন নিকটে আনাইয়া উপদেশ করিতে লাগিলেন, অরে বাছারা, বিদ্যাহীন যে মনুষ্য সে পশু ; অতএব নানা শাস্ত্রসম্মত পণ্ডিতদিগকে যত্নেতে প্রসন্ন করিয়া তাঁহাদের প্রমুখ্যৎ আপনার হিত শুনিয়া ও বেদ ও ব্যাকরণাদি বেদাঙ্গ ও ধর্মশাস্ত্র ও জ্ঞান-শাস্ত্র ও নীতিশাস্ত্র ও বনুর্কোদ ও গর্কর্কবিদ্যা ও নানাবিধ শিল্পবিদ্যা উত্তম-রূপে অধ্যয়ন কর ; এই সকল বিদ্যাতে বিলক্ষণ বিচক্ষণ হও ; ক্ষণমাত্র রূপা কালক্ষেপ করিও না ও হস্তি অথ বথারোহণেতে হৃদুৎ হও ও নিত্য ব্যায়াম কর, ও লক্ষ্যেতে ও উল্লেখ্যেতে ও ধাবনেতে ও গড়চক্রভেদেতে ও বাহুরচনাতে ও বাহুভঙ্গ্যেতে নিপুণ হও।”

About this time, appeared Mrityunjay Sarma's "Batris-Singhasana." Its language is considerably better than that of the "Tota-Itihas" and of the "Lipimala." But the ideas being far-fetched, and the style laboured, a great want of beauty and sweetness is felt. A specimen of the language is given below : —

“এক দিবস রাজা অবন্তীপুরীতে সভা মধ্যে দিব্য সিংহাসনে বসিয়াছেন, ইতোমধ্যে এক দরিদ্র পুরুষ আসিয়া রাজার সম্মুখে উপস্থিত হইল, কথা কিছু কহিল না। তাহাকে দেখিয়া রাজা মনের মধ্যে বিচার করিলেন, যে লোক বাচক্কা করিতে উপস্থিত হয়, তাহার মরণ কালে যেমন শরীরের কম্প হয় এবং মুখে হইতে কথা নির্গত হয় না, ইহারও সেই মত দেখিতেছি, অতএব বুঝিলাম, ইনি বাচক্কা করিতে আসিয়াছেন, কহিতে পারেন না।”

The next noticeable book is the "Krishna-chandra Charita", compiled by Rajib Lochan Mukhopadhyay. It is a biography of Maharaja Krishna-

chandra Ray of Nuddea. It was published first at Serampore in 1808, and then in London in the year 1811. This is, perhaps, the first book of its kind in Bengali in imitation of English biographies. The language is easy and plain, and, at the same time, more developed, though wanting in gracefulness and sweetness. Here is a specimen :—

“তাহাতে পাত্র নিবেদন করিলেন, মহারাজ, আমরা পুরুষানুক্রমে এ রাজ্যের পাত্র, কিন্তু স্বর্গীয় মহারাজার আর আর প্রকার স্মৃতি করিয়াছেন, যজ্ঞ কেহ করেন নাই। মহারাজ এই বাক্য শ্রবণ করিয়া পাত্রকে কহিলেন, আমি অতি বৃহৎ যজ্ঞ করিব, তুমি আয়োজন কর।”

Between this period and the compilation of Vidyasagar's "Vasudeva Charita", appeared Ramjay Tarkalankar's "Sankhyabhasha Sangraha", Lakshmi Narayan Nyayalankar's "Mitakshara-Darpan", Kasinath Tarkapanchanan's "Nyaya-Darsan", "Purusha-Pariksha", "Hitopadesa" "Jnana-Chandrika," "Prabodha-Chandrika," and some other works. Of these, the "Purusha-Pariksha," the "Jnana-Chandrika," the Prabodha-Chandrika,* and some other similar books were prescribed as text-books for the Fort William College. The language of these books is a little more developed than that of the "Krishnachandra Charita." The style too is more refined. The use of Sanskrit words

* These books were all printed. Besides these printed books, some manuscript ones were also used as text-books. We have come across a manuscript copy of versified Bengali version of the "Srimad-Bhagavadgita."

has been more largely resorted to. On account of the use of the bombast, and the lengthy, disconnected construction of the sentences, the language has become insipid, uninteresting and disagreeable ; and for the inappropriate use of the *Sandhi* (combination of letters), it is harsh and jarring. Space will not permit us to give specimens from all the books. A small portion is quoted below from the "Purusha-Pariksha" :—

“বন্ধক কহিতেছে, ভো রাজকুমার আমি স্বাভাবিক লুপ্ত বণিক তোমার ধন লইয়া বাণিজ্যার্থে বৃহন্নৌকারোহণ করিয়া সাগর-পারে গিয়াছিলাম । সেখানে ক্রীত বস্তু বিক্রয় করিয়া মূল ধন হইতে একশত ণ্ড লাভ পাইয়া তথা হইতে আসিতে সমুদ্রের তটের নিকটে আমার বৃহত্তরণী মগ্ন হইল, তাহাতেই আমার সকল ধন নষ্ট হইল, এখন প্রাণমাত্রাবশিষ্ট হইয়া আসিয়াছি। সে বাহা হউক, আমি পূর্বে তোমার নিকট অপরাধ করিয়াছি, তন্নিমিত্ত তুমি আমার প্রাণদণ্ড কর ।”

There is still another book worthy of notice. It is Maharaja Kali Krishna Bahadur's translation of Johnson's *Rasselas*. The language of the book is full of figures of Orthography. It is not incorrect, but there is much incongruity of grammar and rhetoric, and is, therefore, not very plain. Here is a specimen :—

“ইলনাকে উত্তর করিলেন, স্থখ দুঃখের কারণ মানাধি এবং অনিচ্ছিত আর সদা পরস্পর ক্রান্ত এবং নানাঃস্বকে চিত্তবিচিত্র ও অপূৰ্ণ নানাঘটমাধীন হয়। অতএব যিনি আপনাব্যহাকে অতি নির্দিষ্টবাদে নির্দ্ধারিত করেন, তিনি অবশ্য জীবিত থাকিরা, বিবেচনায় ও অনুসন্ধানে পঞ্চ প্রাপ্ত হইবেন ।”

From the specimens given above, the reader must

have formed some idea of the gradual steps of the progress of the Bengali prose literature from the beginning of 1800 to the close of 1840. The first step is the writings of the European missionaries ; the second, the works of some native authors, such as the "Tota-Itihas," the 'Lipimala,' the 'Rajabali,' the "Krishnachandra-Charita," the "Batris-Singhasana," and some other similar books. The third step is the text-books for the Fort William College, such as the "Purusha-Pariksha," the "Hito-padesa," and some others. The three steps clearly indicate gradual development. But the language of Vidyasagar's "Vasudeva Charita" is far more developed than all of them. The manner of expression adopted in this book is quite unprecedented. The language used is plain and easy, and, at the same time, free from blunders. To illustrate that Vidyasagar's language is plain, and very easy to understand, Ramgati Nyayratna has related the following amusing incident. A meeting was once held at the Krishnagar (Nuddea Raj) palace to decide a local contest. After the settlement of the point in dispute, a Sanskrit pundit put down the decision in writing, and read it out to the assembly. One of the audience, a Sanskrit professor, laughed at the composition of the decision, and ridiculed it, saying,—'What is this nonsense ? This is quite Vidyasagar's Bengali ! It is very easy to understand !'

Vidyasagar's abilities to contribute to the deve-

lopment of the Bengali prose were displayed in his very first translation. He did not, in the beginning, attempt at original composition. His early writings were all translations, which served gradually to strengthen his powers of composition, and make him so famous an author. The "Vasudeva-Charita", although only a translation, is not wholly wanting in proofs of his creative genius. Vidyasagar was the first to show the way how to compose translations in chaste, plain, easy, graceful language. But, at the same time, it must be admitted, to his credit, that the language and style of his subsequent translations and original compositions are more refined and elegant than those of the "Vasudeva-Charita." It is obvious, that the difference between the language of this his first translation and that of his subsequent writings is exactly similar to the difference between the language of Johnson's first English translation, the "Voyage to Abyssinia," and that of the latter's subsequent prose works.

However much progress and development the Bengali language may attain, it must always remain highly indebted to Vidyasagar as its pioneer. His style, and arrangement of words and sentences, are peculiar by his own, and bear the appearance of newness at all times. Even when he has made a literal translation, there is no lack of beauty and grace in it.

He, who can express his many thoughts and ideas in the fewest possible words, is reckoned to

be a powerful writer. He, who is expert in the choice of words, particularly suitable and determinate in their signification, and can use them properly, is admired as a good author. He, who rarely expresses the same thoughts more than once, is considered to be a skilful writer. There can be no doubt, that Vidyasagar was an author of this class, as can be easily perceived from the language of his translations, as well as, original compositions. Babu Akshay Kumar Datta's skilfulness in translation and his manner of expression are not less admirable. Akshay Kumar Babu's language is nearly equal to that of Vidyasagar in correctness of grammar and style, but is far inferior to it in variety of expression. It is rather monotonous.

In spite of all these qualities, however, Vidyasagar's "Vasudeva-Charita," was rejected by the authorities of the Fort William College, for which we have found cause to be deeply sorry. We are sorry, not because the Europeans did not approve of it, but because the Hindus have been deprived of its invaluable instructions, in as much as it was not printed, as we have already said. We are deeply sorry, because never more did Vidyasagar exercise his powerful pen and fertile genius in that direction. He never more tried to write another book on the sound principles of Hindu religion. Had he only the inclination, he could have written many instructive books for the guidance of the Hindus in this age of degeneration. If he had had

that inclination, he could easily have shown it in his "Sitar Banavas," one of his best productions. It is said, that in his later years, Vidyasagar intended publishing his "Vasudeva-Charita"; but the manuscript was then missing; he could not find it. After his death, his son, Narayana Babu found it, but quite worn out. No date or year is to be found in it. Most probably it was written sometime between 1842 and 1847.

CHAPTER X.

FIRST APPOINTMENT IN THE SANSKRIT COLLEGE.

In the course of his tenure of office in the Fort William College, Vidyasagar made an intimate acquaintance not only of European Civilians, but also of many respectable natives of this country. He had, about this time, made himself familiar with Raja Krishna Nath, husband of the munificent Maharani Swarnamayi of Cossimbazar. The officers of the Cossimbazar Raj estate treated him with much respect. In the year 1847, in the deceased Raja Krishna Nath's Will Case, one Nabin Chandra, a witness, deposed in Court to that effect.

Subsequently he had such a familiar acquaintance with the Raj family, and even with Maharani Swarnamayi herself, that he did not feel it humiliating to borrow money occasionally of the Maharani. On the one hand, as Vidyasagar helped the officers of the Raj estate with counsels and in

various other forms, so, on the other hand, he received aid from the Maharani in different shapes. We shall have occasion to refer to the matter hereafter.

In 1846, Vidyasagar had to resign his office in the Fort William College. A few days before this, the post of the Assistant Secretary to the Sanskrit College had fallen vacant, on the death of Ram Manikya Vidyalkar, who had been holding the post for some time past. Babu Rassamoy Dutt was still the Secretary to the College. He was a great appreciator of merits. He had known Vidyasagar since he was a student in the Sanskrit College. He firmly believed, that if Vidyasagar could be made Assistant Secretary, he would be able to turn the College, into good account, and make much improvement in all directions. But Rassomoy Babu saw one great difficulty in his way. The pay attached to this post was only 50 rupees, the same as Vidyasagar's pay in the Fort William College, and Rassomoy Babu doubted whether Vidyasagar could be induced to leave the Fort William College and join the Sanskrit College on the same pay. But he hoped for the best. He was firmly determined to take Vidyasagar under him. On the 28th March, 1846, he wrote a letter to Dr. F. J. Mouat, the then Secretary to the Education Council, earnestly requesting him to appoint Vidyasagar to the post of the Assistant Secretary to the Sanskrit College, and, at the same time, to increase the

pay of the post. Among other things, he distinctly stated in his letter, that unless the pay was raised, it would be difficult to find a qualified man of Vidyasagar's attainments. Along with this letter, he sent on Vidyasagar's application, accompanied with his testimonials.

On the other hand, Dr. Mouat himself was on the look-out for a qualified man to fill up the vacancy, and he consulted Mr. Marshall of the Fort William College, as usual with him, on all important matters, on this point. Mr. Marshall at once recommended Vidyasagar. Dr. Mouat was pleased at the two recommendations for Vidyasagar, from two sides for he personally knew him sufficiently well. He, therefore, very gladly appointed him to the vacant post, but did not, at that time, raise his pay. The purport of Dr. Mouat's letter to Rassomoy Babu, dated the 2nd April, 1846, was that he was glad to appoint Vidyasagar to the post of the Assistant Secretary to the Sanskrit College, but was sorry that he was then unable to increase his pay, which might be subsequently raised on approved service. A copy of this letter was also sent to Vidyasagar on the 4th of the same month. Rassomoy Babu now urged our hero to accept the post. "Vidyasagar," said he, "if you accept the post, the College is sure to rise, and when the College rises, your pay must rise too." Vidyasagar saw the force and soundness of Rassomoy Babu's reasoning, and, what with prospects of increment

of his pay, and what with a desire to oblige Rasmoy Babu, he accepted the post of the Assistant Secretary to the Sanskrit College, and joined his new appointment in a few days.

Before leaving the Fort William College, he called on Mr. Marshall, and, among other things, said :—‘ Sir, if there should be friction of opinion, or disagreement of any kind, I shall have to resign my post there, for it is quite against my nature to tolerate injustice or anything of the kind, for the sake of my private interest. I am not anxious on my own account, but I am afraid, lest my dear father should suffer want, or feel any inconvenience, when I am thrown out of employment. I would, therefore, request you to take in my younger brother to my present post. He is a good scholar and well-qualified for the office.’ Dinabandhu Nyayratna, Vidyasagar’s younger brother, was accordingly appointed Head Pandit of the Fort William College.

The Sanskrit College of those days was very different from what it is at the present time. Everything in the College was irregular. Neither the professors, nor the students, observed any regularity of time in attending and leaving the College. They came to the College and left it at their pleasure. Most of the teachers, though not all of them, spent the first part of the day in sweet slumber, and lectured their pupils only in the latter part. Vidyasagar’s first business, on joining his appoint-

ment, was to deprive the teachers of the enjoyment of their sweet sleep during college hours. His next business was to prescribe fixed hours at which the teachers and the students must attend and leave the college. It is said that, in order to enforce the punctual attendance of the professors, Vidyasagar devised a novel plan. One day, seeing that the teachers were not come at the proper time, he went to the outer gates of the college-building and began to pace up and down in front of them. Pandit Bharat Chandra Siromani, the best and most learned professor of the College, thus addressed the other teachers :—" You see, friends, our late attendance is no more to be tolerated. Vidyasagar indirectly warns us." From the next day, all the teachers were punctual, none came late. The students of the college had been used to go out of, and return to, their classes at their pleasure, during college hours. For them Vidyasagar introduced the pass system. No one was allowed to leave his class without a pass. Before Vidyasagar's time, everybody acted according to his sweet will, but Vidyasagar prescribed a rule that the permission of the Secretary must be obtained in every case. In short, Vidyasagar remodelled and regulated almost everything. But still there were some defects left. No perfection can be accomplished in a short time. He expunged all obscene texts from the books prescribed for the students of the college. He introduced a novel plan of teaching Grammar ;

under which the acquisition of Sanskrit Grammar, which had so long been very tedious and disagreeable, was rendered easy and agreeable to the students. He devised a new system of conducting the examination, which had the effect of making that year's result highly satisfactory to Dr. Mouat. He introduced Mathematics into the Belles-lettres class. In short, he brought about changes and improvements in almost all respects. The rules and regulations instituted by him are still in force, and display Vidyasagar's keen intellect and thoughtfulness.

Some time after he had entered into the service of the Sanskrit College, he had a friction with Mr. Karr, the then Principal of the Hindu College. One day, he had an occasion to see the Principal on business. When Vidyasagar entered his room, he was reclining in his easy chair, with his legs upon a table. Perhaps, the white European gentleman did not cherish very generous feelings for the black natives of the soil. He neither received his visitor, nor offered him a seat. He did not even think fit to take down his legs from the table. Vidyasagar very naturally resented the ill-treatment of the European, but he was quite helpless at the time. He had gone on urgent business, and could not leave the place without finishing it. No sooner was the business done, than he left the presence of the haughty European. But he was a man of manly spirit, and he looked out for opportunities to be

revenged upon Mr. Karr, who had offered him so great an insult. He was not long in finding one. In a few days, Mr. Karr had an occasion to call on Vidyasagar on business. Now, thought Vidyasagar, was the time to teach the haughty European a good lesson. When Mr. Karr's card was presented to him, he placed his slippered legs upon the table in his front, and lay reclining in his chair, in a half recumbent posture. When he had thus seated himself, he directed Mr. Karr to be ushered in. There was no seat for the visitor; he had removed all the extra seats previously. Mr. Karr was highly offended at such unmannerly conduct on the part of a native, and as soon as his business was finished, he left the place in great wrath.

Mr. Karr reported Vidyasagar's improper conduct towards himself to Dr. Mouat, the Secretary to the Educational Council, who called on Vidyasagar for an explanation. The explanation, submitted by him, was rather novel and curious. The purport of what he said was,—‘I thought that we (*i. e.* natives) were an uncivilised race, quite unacquainted with refined manners of receiving a gentleman visitor. I learned the manners, of which Mr. Karr complains, from the gentleman himself, a few days ago, when I had an occasion to call on him. My notions of refined manners being thus formed from the conduct of an enlightened, civilised European, I behaved myself as respectfully towards him, as he had himself done. I do not think that,

in this matter, I am to blame in the least.¹ Dr. Mouat was highly pleased at Vidyasagar's keen sense of self-respect and manly spirit. He requested Mr. Karr to have an interview with Vidyasagar, and settle the matter amicably, which the former did not fail to do. This manly spirit and fearless conduct of Vidyasagar gained him the victory almost everywhere.

Vidyasagar was always a great appreciator of merits. While he was still Assistant Secretary to the Sanskrit College, the post of the professor of Belles-lettres fell vacant. Babu Rassomoy Dutt, Secretary to the College, and Dr. Mouat, Secretary to the Education Council, both urged Vidyasagar to accept the post. Though the pay of this office was higher than what he was then getting, he declined the offer. His idea was, that if he accepted the post, he would lose his influence, and would thus be deprived of all opportunities of introducing reforms into the College. He secured the post to Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, one of his class-friends, whom he knew to be fully qualified for the office, in the manner already stated in a former chapter. It is said, that before the vacancy was filled up permanently, one Sarva-nanda Vidyavagis, an old man, had been acting as officiating professor of Belles-lettres. Some expressed their desire to see the old man made permanent. But Vidyasagar was quite against the idea. There were two reasons for it. The first

was that the man spent a great part of his college hours in sweet sleep, and the other was that Madan Mohan Tarkalankar was far more qualified than Sarvananda Vidyavagis. It was quite against Vidyasagar's nature to show undue favour in the discharge of his public duties.

About this time, a great calamity befel Vidyasagar. His fourth brother, Hara Chandra, a lad of 12 years, had come to Calcutta to prosecute his studies. This boy was the most intelligent of all the brothers, and was, therefore, a great favourite with Vidyasagar. Shortly after his arrival, he was seized with Cholera, which took him away from this vicious world. Vidyasagar's grief at the untimely death of his beloved brother was excessive. He was so much afflicted, that for several months he hardly ate anything or slept in the night. His health broke down. When the sad news of her dear little son's death reached the unfortunate mother, her grief knew no bounds. She was quite disconsolate. She gave up food and sleep, and wept day and night. Vidyasagar sent his brother, Dinabandhu, with the other younger brothers, to his mournful, disconsolate mother to console her. After the lapse of nearly six months, when the keenness and severity of her grief had somewhat lessened, Vidyasagar again fetched his brothers back to Calcutta.

Some time after this mournful incident, Vidyasagar had a great disagreeable friction with Rasso-

moy Babu. The cause of this sad disagreement was that, the mode of instruction instituted by him did not meet with the Secretary's approbation. When Vidyasagar saw that his official superior had begun to oppose his measures and policy, he resigned his office. Both Babu Rassomoy Dutt and Dr. Mouat tried their best to persuade him not to resign, but the firm and resolute Vidyasagar would not move a hair from his determination. His friends and relations remonstrated with him strongly on what they considered as a rash, hasty step on his part, but Vidyasagar was a man of great spirit and fixedness of purpose, and he would not yield in the slightest degree. They were all very anxious about him as to how he would manage to maintain his large family. His idea was, he said, that he would rather turn a peddler of potatoes and other vegetables, or open an ordinary grocer's shop, than work in a post which was damaging to his dignity and self-respect. It was quite against his nature to blindly obey any one, or depend on another, or look for favours by flattery. He came into this world to leave a high model of noble heroism, for the benefit of his fellow-brethren.

He never lost heart, or was dejected for a single moment, at the loss of his appointment. He was never heard to regret the step he had taken. He was as cheerful as ever. He did not send away the many poor school boys, whom he had given shelter in his own house and whom he had been

providing with food and clothes. He managed to defray the maintenance of his Calcutta family by the 50 rupees which his brother, Dinabandhu, earned from the Fort William College. For the support of his Birsingha family, he had to borrow 50 rupees every month and remit it to his father. In this way Vidyasagar struggled with his difficulties manfully, yet he never thought fit to condescend to meanness and flattery.

He did not re-enter into any service till March 1849. The intervening period he devoted to the acquisition of English and Hindi. He acquired a greater proficiency in the two languages than before. While he was thus out of employment, he was engaged for several months, at the request of Dr. Mouat, in giving private lessons to a European gentleman, Captain Bank, in Sanskrit, Bengali and Hindi. When the captain had finished his course of instruction, he offered Vidyasagar tuition-fee at the rate of 50 rupees a month, for several months together. But the noble-minded Vidyasagar, poor as he was, generously declined the offer. He said to the Captain :—‘ You are a friend of Dr. Mouat’s, who is also a great friend of mine. I came to give you lessons at the request of our mutual friend. I can accept no fee from you.’ Such was Vidyasagar’s greatness and strength of mind. He was, at that time, in great pecuniary difficulties. Three or four hundred rupees, would have gone a great way to remove his embarrass-

ments, yet he felt delicacy in receiving the money, simply because, he thought, it would be contrary to the rules of friendship.

CHAPTER XI.

THE "VETALA-PANCHAVINGSATI," HIS FIRST PUBLISHED BOOK ;—RE-ENTRANCE INTO THE FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE.

In 1847, Vidyasagar first published his *Vetala Panchavingsati*, a translation of the Hindi "*Vaitala-Painchisi*." It was compiled at the instance of Mr. Marshall for the use of the students of the Fort William College. There is also a similar book in Sanskrit, titled the "*Vetala-Panchavingsaka*", by Sivadas Bhatta. It is not known for certain why Vidyasagar translated the Hindi book instead of the Sanskrit.

In his translation, Vidyasagar discarded all obscene portions of the original. The language of the book is plain, sweet and beautiful, though the use of copious long compound words in the first edition had made it rather a little jarring. But this defect was rectified in subsequent editions. Those, who are truly great, never feel ashamed to make right their errors. When Johnson saw that the language of "*The Rambler*" was bombast, he tried to remedy the defect in his next book, "*The Lives of the Poets*,"

Though the language of the *Vetala-Panchaving-sati* was more elegant and refined than that of the "Vasudeva-Charita," it was, at first, rejected by the authorities of the Fort William College, because K. M. Banarji, whom Mr. Marshall had intrusted with the examination of the book, had not approved it. Vidyasagar, dissatisfied with this decision, referred the matter to the European missionaries of Serampore. Mr. Marshman, certified it to be the best of all the Bengali prose books published up to that time. It was then that the authorities of the Fort William College purchased one hundred copies of the book for their college at an outlay of 300 rupees. The remaining copies were presented to friends.

It is no wonder that the book did not, at first, meet with general approbation. Such is the fate of all writers. The invaluable treasures of Shakspeare lay hidden for a long time. What was the fate of Milton's great work, the "Paradise Lost?" It was not appreciated during his life-time. Johnson could not procure a suit of decent clothes. Goldsmith struggled hard with poverty all his life. But why run to other countries for illustrations? What was the fate of the great Bengali poet, Michael Madhusudana Datta? He had to pass the last days of his life in a medical hospital, separated from his family, and forsaken by his countrymen. Babu Hem Chandra Banarji, the great living poet of Bengal, is immersed in poverty, living on the small pittance generously awarded by Government.

Vidyasagar may be said to have been rather more fortunate in this respect. The *Vetala-Panchavingsati* was soon appreciated by all classes of people. Even at the present day, many readers of Bengali read the book with great gusto.

We should notice here, in passing, that Babu Jogendra Nath Vidyabhushan, M. A., son-in-law of Madan Mohan Tarkalankar (now deceased), has written a biography of his father-in-law. In this book, the author says :—

‘Into Vidyasagar’s *Vetala-Panchavingsati*, many new ideas and sweet sentences were introduced by Tarkalankar. It was so far corrected and revised by him, that it might be said to be the joint production of the two friends, like the works of Beaumont and Fletcher.’

Vidyasagar does not admit this. He says that the original manuscript of the *Vetala-Panchavingsati* was merely read out to Madan Mohan Tarkalankar and Giris Chandra Vidyaratna, and that a few words only were altered at their suggestion. The truth of Vidyasagar’s statement will be evident from the two letters that passed between Vidyasagar and Giris Chandra Vidyaratna. The purport of the two letters are given below :—

‘From

‘ISVAR CHANDRA SARMA (VIDYASAGAR)

‘To

‘GIRIS CHANDRA VIDYARATNA.

I do not know whether you are aware that

Babu Jogendra Nath Bandyopadhyay, M. A., late scholar, Sanskrit College, has recently issued a biography of Madan Mohan Tarkalankar. In this book, the author writes,—‘Into Vidyasagar’s *Vetala-Panchavingsati* many new ideas and sweet sentences were introduced by Tarkalankar. It was so far corrected and revised by him, that it might be said to be the joint production of the two friends, like the works of Beaumont and Fletcher.’ The *Vetala-Panchavingsati* is again under print. I think it necessary to say something, in the present edition, about Jogendra Babu’s insinuation. You very well know what hand Tarkalankar had in the correction of the *Vetala-Panchavingsati*. I shall feel obliged, if you will write to me what you know. It is needless to say, that I intend publishing your letter along with my explanation.

‘Yours &c.

‘ISVAR CHANDRA SARMA.’

REPLY.

From

‘GIRIS CHANDRA SARMA (VIDYARATNA).

‘To

‘ISVAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR.

‘I am surprised at what Jogendra Nath Bandyopadhyay, M. A., says about the *Vetala-Panchavingsati* in his biography of Madan Mohan Tarkalankar. He says:—‘Into Vidyasagar’s *Vetala-Panchavingsati* many new ideas and sweet sentences were introduced by Madan Mohan Tarka-

lankar. It was so far corrected and revised by him that it might be said to be the joint production of the two friends, like the works of Beaumont and Fletcher.' This is quite untrue and absurd. I think, Jogendra Babu has been quite wrong in giving publicity to such falsities and absurdities.

'The real truth is, that you read out the manuscript of the *Vetala-Panchavingsati* to Madan Mohan Tarkalankar and myself. We gave our opinions, at that time, on one or two points, and a few words were accordingly altered here and there. Neither Tarkalankar, nor I, had any more hand in the composition of the *Vetala-Panchavingsati*.

'I have no objection to your publishing this letter of mine, if you think it necessary to do so.

'Yours &c.

"GIRISH CHANDRA SARMA"

To revert. About this time, Vidyasagar set up the "Sanskrit Press," jointly with Madan Mahon Tarkalankar. * They had equal shares. The press cost 600 rupees, and the capital was raised by loans. The first book printed in this Press was the works of the most famous poet, Bharat Chandra,

* Not long after, the two friends had a disagreement. Vidyasagar was so much displeased with Tarkalankar, that he was prepared to cut off all connections with him. Babus Syama Charan Biswas and Raj Krishna Banerji settled the dispute amicably. Vidyasagar became the sole proprietor of the Sanskrit Press.

published by Vidyasagar. The original manuscript of the book was procured from the Nuddea Raj. The authorities of the Fort William College purchased 100 copies of it, and paid 600 rupees, with which the loan was paid off. By and by, the Press became a profitable business.

Vidyasagar was a great admirer of Bharat Chandra's works. He cherished respectful feelings for the great poet, who, he said, was in no way inferior to Kalidas, the only difference between the two poets was, that the one versified in Sanskrit, and the other in Bengali. He believed, that the refined Bengali of "Annadamangal", one of the works of Bharat Chandra, was the best model for the Bengali authors. In his opinion, Bharat Chandra was an unalloyed Bengali poet. After this great poet, he gave the next place to Dasarathi Ray, Isvar Chandra Gupta, and Rasik Chandra Ray, all of whom he considered to be purely Bengali poets. He thought the poems of Isvar Chandra Gupta very good. The two were great friends, although their opinions differed on some points, especially on widow marriage. Vidyasagar had also a great fondness for Rasik Chandra Ray, who may be said to have been the last of the unalloyed Bengali poets. It was at the instance of Vidyasagar, that some of the works of Rasik Chandra were selected as text-books for the vernacular schools of Bengal. It was only Vidyasagar who backed and encouraged this artless bard,

Rasik Chandra was a native of Bara, a village very near to Serampore. He had a great intimate friendship with Vidyasagar. He was so sincerely grieved at the death of his friend, that since that mournful event his health completely broke down. He lived only two short years after Vidyasagar. The deep, unfeigned grief, he felt at the loss of his sincere friend, rent his heart, and hastened him to the gates of death.

In 1848, appeared Vidyasagar's *History of Bengal* in Bengali. It was compiled from Marshman's "History of Bengal". It relates the events from the time of Nabab Serajuddowla to that of the Governor-General, Lord Bentinck. Vidyasagar styled his book, *History of Bengal, part II.*, a "History of Bengal, Part I." compiled by Ramgati Nyayratna having already appeared. This latter book deals with the events prior to Serajuddowla. Vidyasagar's *History of Bengal* was appreciated by all classes of people. The language of the book is plain, easy, and elegant. The first edition contained the words 'written with the permission of Mr. Marshall', from which it may be surmised, that the book was compiled at his request. This was Vidyasagar's first translation from English. He has shown the same abilities here as in his previous translations from Sanskrit and Hindi. But merely abilities for translation or writing beautiful language do not make a good historian. He should put forth his energies to make careful researches and

determine the truth. Vidyasagar did make no attempts in that direction. He has painted Serajuddowla in the same light as Marshman. His Library has a good collection of many valuable historical works. If he had taken pains to study them carefully, he would probably have arrived at a very different conclusion. In fact, it is very doubtful whether there was any such thing as a *Black Hole*. On the whole, there is ample evidence to show, that Serajuddowla was not as cruel or impolitic, as he has been painted by European authors. Some say, that Vidyasagar had a great mind to write a complete history of India in Bengali, and, for that purpose, he had collected the historical books long after the compilation of his *History of Bengal*. But ill-health and infirmity prevented him from carrying the project into effect.

In March, 1849, the post of the "Head-writer and Treasurer" of the Fort William College fell vacant on the resignation of Babu Durga Charan Banarji. The reader is already aware, that it was Vidyasagar who had secured Durga Charan Babu the post, and that the latter attended the Medical College lectures as an out-student. Under the rules of the College, Durga Charan Babu was not permitted to appear at the medical examinations and obtain a diploma. But he had acquired a great proficiency in the healing art, and, in 1849, he set himself up as an independent medical practitioner. He soon won a great reputation.

On the resignation of Durga Charan Babu, Mr. Marshall appointed Vidyasagar to the vacant post on a monthly salary of 80 rupees. He was now in comparatively easy circumstances. He again found time to apply himself diligently to the acquisition of English, in which he acquired a great proficiency. He could now write decent English. Even European Civilians were pleased at, and admired, the beauty of his style. His English penmanship was also beautiful.

In the same year, appeared the "Subhakari," a Bengali periodical, contributed to by some of the students of the Hindu College. Vidyasagar was enlisted one of the writers for the paper. It is said that Vidyasagar's able pen soon made the magazine successful. Some say, that its success was no less due to the contributions of Pandit Madhav Chandra Tarkasiddhanta, another of the writers. The Journal however, did not live long. At the request of some of his friends, Vidyasagar wrote in it an article on the evil consequences of early marriage.

In this year, Vidyasagar was appointed examiner of Bengali for the senior scholarship examination. The subject of the Bengali essay was 'Female education.' At this examination, Nil Kamal Bhaduri, a student of the Krishnagar College, stood first and won a gold medal. In this connection, Vidyasagar had an opportunity of making intimate acquaintance of J. E. D. Bethune, the

founder of the well-known Bethune School of Calcutta. It is a girl, or rather a female, school for the education of native women. It was first started in 1849 with only 25 girl pupils. Its original name was the 'Hindu Girls' School,' which was subsequently converted to its present name, "Bethune School," after the name of its founder.

It was, about this time, that Vidyasagar was charged with the annual examinations of the students of the Junior and Senior departments of the Sanskrit College. In this connection, he had to come in contact with the famous German Scholar, Dr. Rowar, who was also another of the examiners. The charge of setting questions was intrusted to both of them. Dr. Rowar was, no doubt, vastly erudite in Sanskrit literature, * yet he had to obtain Vidyasagar's help in framing the questions. They were given some remuneration for the work. Vidyasagar did not appropriate the money to his own private use. He made a generous and charitable use of it. He laid out a part of it in giving a copy of the great Sanskrit epic, The Mahabharat, as a prize to Ram Kamal Bhattacharya, who stood first in Rhetoric and Belles-lettres at the Senior scholarship examination. For this, he had to obtain permission of the

* He has translated into English two Sanskrit works, viz. "Sahityadarpana," a book on Rhetoric, and "Bhasha-Parichheda," a book on *Nyaya* philosophy.

Education Council. The rest he gave away to the poor and the needy.

In September, 1841, appeared Vidyasagar's *Jibana Charita*. This was also a translation, compiled from Chambers's "Biography." It contained the lives of Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Herschel, Grocius, Leonius, Duval, and Jones. The language of the book is as plain, melodious, and elegant as that of his former productions.

Some might insinuate that, instead of narrating and illustrating the lives of good and great men of the country, he went to seek for them in foreign lands. But it should be borne in mind, that Vidyasagar had the very liberal views of a real Hindu. He was not prejudiced against any nation, country, or religion. He appreciated merits, wherever he found them. Besides, there can be no objection or harm in trying to imitate the virtues of a man, though he be of a different nation or religion. The names and works of those good and great men, who sacrificed their lives for the welfare of their country, or by noble deeds added to the glory of their nation, or benefited the world, should not be the exclusive property of the particular countries in which they were born. The lives of such illustrious persons, as form the subjects of his discourse in the *Jibana Charita* are commendable to all classes of people. The Hindu, the Mussulman, or the Christian may be equally benefited by them. Vidyasagar cannot be blamed for placing these exemplary models

before the youths of his country. But it may be said, without fear of controversion, that he made no attempts to illustrate the virtues of the great men of his country, though there is no lack of materials in the Sanskrit literature. It is said, that his best English tutor, Babu Ananda Krishna Basu of Sobhabazar, urged him, to compile a biographical book on the lives of the great men of this country, and that Vidyasagar collected sufficient materials for that purpose, but that ill health and want of time prevented him from carrying out the laudable project.

In this year, a happy event took place in Vidyasagar's family. His only son, Narayan Chandra, was born on the 14th November, 1849. There were great rejoicings in the family. He had afterwards four daughters in succession. But he had soon to face again a dire calamity. Vidyasagar's fifth brother, Haris Chandra, a little boy of eight years, had an attack of Cholera, which carried him off. The boy had come to Calcutta for education. Vidyasagar was deeply afflicted, and when the sad news reached Birsingha, his mother was quite disconsolate. To console her, Vidyasagar fetched his mother to Calcutta. She lived here six months with the family of Babu Raj Krishna Banarji, there being no female accomodation in Vidyasagar's own house. When the severity of her grief had somewhat lessened, she was sent back to Birsingha.

CHAPTER XII.

RE-ENTRANCE INTO THE SERVICE OF THE SANSKRIT COLLEGE.

Vidyasagar's second term of office in the Fort William College lasted for a short period only. He resigned this post on the 8th December, 1850, and on the next day (*i. e.* 9th December, 1850) rejoined the Sanskrit College as professor of Belles-lettres on a monthly pay of 90 rupees. At his request, Babu Raj Krishna Banarji, his favourite pupil and friend, was appointed to the post vacated by him in the Fort William College. Some time before this, Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, the former professor of Belles-lettres, had a very severe dysentery, and absolutely needed a change of climate. An opportunity presented itself. The office of the Judge-Pandit of Murshidabad had fallen vacant. At the instance of his friend and patron, Mr. J. E. D. Bethune, Madan Mohan was appointed to the vacant place. He left Calcutta by the end of November, and his place in the Sanskrit College, consequently, fell vacant. Dr. Mouat, the Secretary to the Education Council, offered the post to Vidyasagar. He was at first unwilling to accept it. But when he was urged and pressed by Dr. Mouat, he accepted it on condition, that he would have also the powers of a Principal in the management of the College.

Unlike other colleges, the Sanskrit College had



Narayan Chandra Vidyaratna,
Vidyasagar's son.

no Principal. The executive functions of the Principal were discharged by the Secretary and his assistant. In the beginning of 1851, these two posts were abolished, and in their stead the post of Principal was created. Vidyasagar was made the first Principal in January, 1851.

Babu Jogendra Nath Bandyopadhyay, mentioned above, in his biography of his father-in-law, Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, says :—

‘It is said, that when the post of the Secretary was vacant in the Sanskrit College, Bethune requested Tarkalankar to accept the situation. But he recommended Vidyasagar to Bethune as the proper person qualified for the post, and Vidyasagar was accordingly appointed Secretary’.

But Vidyasagar does not admit this. In his preface to the eleventh edition of the *Vetala-Panchavingsari*, he has clearly refuted Jogendra Babu. Among other things, he says :—

‘There is no truth in this story. It is a mere fiction invented by the author. Madan Mohan Tarkalankar entered the Sanskrit College as professor of Belles-lettres in 1846, and he left it in November 1846 and went away to Murshidabad as Judge-Pandit of the place. During his tenure of office in the Sanskrit College, the post of the Secretary never fell vacant. It was all along held by Babu Rassamoy Dutt. How can it be possible then, that the post of the Secretary having fallen vacant, and having been offered to Madan Mohan

Tarkalankar, he secured me the situation, instead of accepting it himself?

'The true story of my appointment as Principal of the Sanskrit College is this. When Madan Mohan Tarkalankar went away as Judge-Pandit of Murshidabad, his place in the Sanskrit College as professor of Belles-lettres, fell vacant. Dr. Mouat, the then secretary to the Education Council, offered the post to me. For several reasons, I at first declined his offer. But still he persisted in urging me. I told him at last, that I was prepared to accept the situation, if the Education Council would give me the executive powers of a Principal. Dr. Mouat consented, and made me enter into an agreement to that effect. I was then installed as professor of Belles-lettres. Shortly after this, Babu Rassomoy Dutt resigned his office as Secretary of the Sanskrit College, and I was directed to submit a report on the state of the College at that time and the measures that should be adopted for its improvement. My report met with the approbation of the Education Council, and I was made Principal of the Sanskrit College. Hitherto the functions of the Principal had been performed by the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary. The two offices were now combined into one. The post of Principal was newly created, and, by the end of January, 1851, I was appointed Principal of the Sanskrit College.

That Madan Mohan Tarkalankar had no hand

in Vidyasagar's appointment to the post of Principal of the Sanskrit College, is clearly seen from the above. On the contrary, there is ample evidence to show that Madan Mphan's gradual promotion and success in life were due mainly to the exertions of Vidyasagar. Tarklankar himself admitted this in a letter which he wrote to Babu Syama Charan Bisvas, a mutual friend, at the time when the two (Vidyasagar and Tarkalankar) had a great disagreement. The letter ran to the following effect :—

‘My dear Syam,

‘All my promotions, and even my present appointment as a Deputy Magistrate, * are due to Vidyasagar's help. When that Vidyasagar is offended and displeased with me, I have no delight in this appointment. I should at once resign my post and run to him. What shall I say, Syam ? I have been working very dully and cheerlessly since I have been transferred to this Sub-Division. How shall I express my unhappiness or painful feelings ? My early associate and dearest friend, the amiable Vidyasagar, who is more than a brother to me, has not spoken to me for six months. I am dead, though living. Syam, you know everything about me, and it is to you, therefore, that I open my painful mind.’

* Some time after his appointment as Judge-Pandit of Murshidabad, Madan Mohan Tarkalankar was made a Deputy Magistrate.

Now to revert to our narrative. Shortly after his appointment as professor of Belles-lettres, Vidyasagar was charged by the Education Council to report on the working of the Sanskrit College, for they were already afraid, that the dissolution of the Institution was not very far off. Their fear was not quite unfounded. The numerical strength of the College had been falling off; there were no new admissions. The main cause of decrease in the number of students was, that there were no worldly prospects before them. English education had much spread in the country through the exertions and encouragement of the educational authorities. The Education Council had taken over charge of the education department in 1842. Since that year they had devoted themselves solely to the propagation of high English and Vernacular educations. In 1841, there were 28 schools with 4,632 pupils and 191 teachers. In 1855, these numbers rose to 151, 13 167 and 455 respectively. The Council had made sufficient provisions for the examinations and scholarships for the students of English. But they had not given so much attention and encouragement to Sanskrit education. Besides, those who were instructed in English had ample fields for employment, while the Sanskrit-knowing pundits had none. Consequently, the desire of the people for Sanskrit education had begun to lessen. All these circumstances led the Education Council to fear, that the dissolution of the Sanskrit College

was near. They had once resolved to abolish the Institution altogether. But, before running to the extreme, they thought it more advisable to try first, whether any measures could be adopted for its improvement. They, therefore, asked Vidyasagar for a report on the subject. They believed him to be fully qualified for the purpose.

Vidyasagar comprehended the situation and the purpose of the Council. He applied himself, heart and soul, to think of some novel plan and mode of instruction. He knew fully well that unless new policies and methods were introduced, it would be very difficult to save the Sanskrit College from imminent destruction. He had a great inventive genius, and he, after much reflection, succeeded in devising new schemes, both for the management of the College and the instruction of the pupils. On the 16th December, 1850, he submitted a very able and learned report, which won the admiration of the Education Council. The report was lengthy, but it displayed his wisdom and fore-thought. To satisfy the curiosity of the reader, we will quote it here in full.

TO

F. J. MOUAT ESQ., M. D.

SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL OF EDUCATION.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit for the information of the Council of Education a report on the Sanscrit College,

drawn up agreeably to the instructions conveyed in your letter No. 3538, dated the 5th instant.

I beg leave to remark that it has long been in my contemplation to submit a report of the nature now furnished, but circumstances deterred me from such a step. I am now, however, happy to have an opportunity of carrying out my wishes, as a matter of duty, under the sanction of the Council.

REPORT.

I. GRAMMAR DEPARTMENT.

Under the present system, this Department consists of 5 Classes (1). The works studied are Mugdhabodha, Dhatupatha, Amarakosha and Bhatti Kavya ; the 5th. Class studying seventeen pages of Mugdhabodha, the 4th Class 42 pages of the same work ; the 3rd. Class 100 pages ; the 2nd Class the remaining 90 pages of the same book together with Dhatupatha : and the 1st Class a few Books of Bhatti Kavya and a certain portion of Amarakosha (2). Four (3). years is the prescribed period for con-

(1) After the foundation of the College in 1824, there were only two Grammar Classes, one of the Mugdhabodha, and another of Panini. The 2nd Mugdhabodha Grammar Class was Established in January 1825, the 3rd in November 1825, the 4th in May 1846, and the 5th in January 1847. The Panini class was dropped in January, 1828.

(2) At first the Mugdhabodha Grammar and a few Books of the Bhatti Kavya were read from the beginning to the end in all these Classes. Though called first, second, third and fourth the promotions from each of these Classes were to the Sahitya or Literature class. The present division of Study of different parts in different classes and the study of the Amarakosha and Dhatupatha were introduced by orders of the Council of Education, dated the 31st October, 1846.

(3) The original period for study was 3 years—extended to 4 years in 1840.

tinuing in this Department, but 5 years are necessary to enable a student to pass through the 5 Grades. For want of a better system, the advantage gained is very little, compared with the length of time spent by students in this Department.

“Mugdhabodha is a very short compendium of Grammar. The Author Vopadeva seems to have had brevity simply in view. Having had this for his object, he has consequently made his work extremely difficult. The Sanscrit is in itself a very difficult language, and to begin its study with a difficult Grammar seems, in my opinion, not to be a well chosen plan. Experience shows what difficulties one has to surmount, when studying his Grammar in this style. Young lads when begin to study Sanscrit, on account of the extreme difficulty of the Grammar Mugdhabodha, only learn by rote what their instructors say, without being able themselves to understand the contents of the work they read. Thus 5 years pass in the study of Grammar alone without getting any essential introduction to the language itself. It seems to be an astounding fact that one should be studying a language for 5 years, and scarcely understand a bit of it. Moreover, the Mugdhabodha, with all its voluminous commentaries, which last however are not read in the College, is an imperfect Grammar. So under the present system, the first 5 years of a student of the Sanscrit College is almost lost to useless purposes. After all his toil and trouble, his acquirements in Grammar are very imperfect. Again, Dhatupatha, another of the works studied in this Department, is a collection of Sanscrit roots in verse. Amarakosha, the 3rd. work of study, is a Dictionary also in verse. These two works, when mastered, I admit, are of some assistance, to the study of Literary works. But the advantage gained is not at all commensurate to the time and labour required to get them by heart. Besides, almost all the standard Sanscrit poetical works, which is the

main part of Sanscrit Literature, being accompanied by excellent commentaries by Mallinatha supersede altogether, the use of the study of the abovenamed two works. Dhatupatha and Amarakosha, I beg leave to say that this commentator is not like his brethren who "blanch the obscure places and discourse upon the plain." Under the above considerations, I do not think it a good plan to spend the first years of study in the Sanscrit College in reading Mugdhabodha, Dhatupatha, and Amarakosha. Bhatti Kavya, the fourth and best work of Study in this Department, is a Poem, the theme of which is Rama and his adventures. This work was purposely written to exemplify the rules of Grammar. It is not altogether ill adapted for the Grammar Department.

After all these considerations, I beg leave to propose the following remodelled System of Study for the Grammar Department. Should the Council be pleased to adopt the suggestion, I do think, in my humble opinion, that in four years, the time prescribed now for Grammar study, the students shall have a thorough knowledge of Grammar and tolerable proficiency in Literature besides, and they will not experience that difficulty in the Sahitya Class which they do now, being made all at once, just after finishing an imperfect Grammar, to begin with the standard works without having had an insight into the language.

The System I would propose is this : The boys, instead of beginning the Grammar at once in the Sanskrit language, should learn some of the most fundamental rules dressed in the easiest Bengali ; then they should go on with two or three Sanscrit "Readers," to be compiled. These Readers should consist of easy selection from the Hitopadesha, Panchatantra, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and from other works suited for the purpose. This will take the students some two years. After this they should begin with Sidhanta Kaumudi, Bhatttoji Dikshita, the study of which

they should continue to the highest class of the Grammar Department. Of all the Sanskrit Grammars, this is decidedly the best and the highest authority on the subject. It is at once complete and simple. Along with Siddhanta Kaumudi the students should also study Raghu Vansha and selections Bhatti Kavya, Dashakumara Charita &c. &c. * I beg leave also to propose that instead of 5 classes there should be 4, and the 5th be considered as a section of the 4th, both studying the same books and the promotions from both the classes being to the 3rd. By this arrangement a year will be conveniently saved and the period for the Grammar Department instead of being 5, shall be 4 years.

2. SAHITYA OR GENERAL LITERATURE.

The students coming from the Grammar Department have to study in this class for 2 years. Whilst here they read the following works :—

1. Raghuvansha, 2. Kumarsambhava, 3. Meghduta,
4. Kirtarjunlya, 5. Shishupalabadha, 6. Nalshadha Charita,
7. Shakuntala, 8. Vikramorvvashi, 9. Ratnavali, 10. Mudra-
- rakshasa, 11. Uttara Charita, 12. Dasakumara Charita,
- and 13. Kadambari.

They also practise translating from Bengali into Sanskrit and *vice versa*, and attend the Mathematical class.

The first 6 of the 13 books, above mentioned, are the standard Poetical works ; The 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th are Dramas : the last two are prose compositions. Raghu-vansha is a historical Poem in 9 books. Its theme is the adventures of Rama, those of his four immediate ancestors and the adventures of his descendants down to Agnivarana.

* In a subsequent communication Pandit Isvar Chandra Sarma recommended the introduction into the 1st Grammar class of the "Vrittaraṇakara," a highly esteemed work on Prosody.

Kumarsambhava, from the name, would appear to be a Poem celebrating the birth of Kartikeya, the Mars of the Hindus. But the 7 books that are extant embrace a certain portion of the intended theme. The poem as it stands describes the birth of Parvati, the mother of Kartikeya, the burning of Kamadeva, the god of Love, by Shiva, the Tapasya (austerities) of Parvati and her marriage with Shiva. Meghaduta is a Poem in 118 slokas. A Yaksha or Demigod having excited the wrath of his master Kuvera, the God of wealth, was doomed by the curse of the Master Deity to remain in a state of separation away from his beloved wife in a distant land for the length of one year. The lover in his distressed condition addresses a cloud to bear his message to his wife at Alaka, the capital of Kuvera. The Sakuntala and Vikramorvashi are Dramas; the first has for its subject the story of Sakuntala, the adopted daughter of a sage, named Kanva, and Dushmanta, a king; the plot of the second is the story of Pururava, a king, and Urvashi, a nymph. All these are very excellent productions. They are by the immortal Kalidasa. Every one of them bears the stamp of great genius. Shishupalabadha, Kiratarjuniya, and Naishadha Charita are epic poems, the first by Magha in 20 Books, and the second by Bharavi in 17 Books, the third by Shriharsha in 22 Books. The death of Shishupala by the hand of Krishna, his cousin, is the theme of Magha's poem. The Kiratarjuniya contains the Tapasya of Arjuna, his combat with Shiva in the disguise of a Kirata or barbarian, and finally his acquisition of certain weapons as rewards from Shiva who was pleased with his military prowess. The adventures of Nalaraja form the subject matter of Naishadha Charita. The first mentioned two works possess all the attributes of good epics, only now and then there are some very tedious passages. The 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Books of Shishupalabadha, though the finest specimens of poetry, and the 7th, 8th 9th and 10th Books of Kiratarjuniya

have in many places very obscene passages. Naishadha Charita from the beginning to the end is bombastic and hyperbolic. Its style is neither elegant nor chaste. There are occasional bursts however of fine passages. Uttara Charita by Bhavabhuti is a Drama embracing the latter part of the career of Rama. Ratnavali is also a Drama. Dhavaka is its author. He was paid by Raja Shriharsha to write this work along with another, and attribute its authorship to him. The story of Raja Udayana and Ratnavali is the plot of this drama. These two works are excellent in every respect. Mudrarakshasa by Vishakhadatta may be called a political Drama. In its contents we find that Chanakya, the Prime Minister of Chandra Gupta, Sandracottas of the Greeks, is applying his diplomatic skill to consolidate the newly acquired Empire of his master, by baffling all the efforts of Rakshasa, the loyal Prime Minister of the subverted Nanda family, to subvert in turn the new dynasty. This is also a good piece of composition. Dashakumara Charita and Kadambari are in prose. In the first, a certain number of friends are relating to each other the history of their travels. The style is pure and chaste. There are, however, some objectionable passages. Dandi is its author. Kadambari is a novel or rather an epic poem in prose. It is in two parts. The first part is a masterpiece of Sanskrit composition. The author Vanabhatta did not live to complete his admirable work. His son wrote the second part. The production of the son is far inferior to that of the father.

Having laid all this before the Council, I beg leave to state there is not much alteration required in the purely literary studies of this class. With regard to Mathematical studies, I will speak hereafter when I report on the Jyotisha class. The change I would propose is this ; Raghu-vansha as I have proposed in my Report of the Grammar Department should be transferred to the 1st Grammar

class ; and Dashakumara Charitra, instead of being read entire here : be studied in selections in one of the Grammar classes, and that Sishupalabadha, Kiratarjuniya, and Naishadha Charita having many objectionable passages, as stated before, instead of being read entire, be studied in selections. The first part only of Kadambari should be read. All the other works should be read entire. In addition to this, I beg leave to propose that two other works Viracharita, and Santishataka be studied in this class. The former is the first part of that drama of which Uttara-Charita is the second, being in no way inferior to it. The Shantishataka is an excellent didactic poem. The students should practice translating as before. They should also write Essays in Sanskrit and Bengali.

3. ALANKARA OR RHETORIC CLASS.

After Sahitya, the students come to this class and continue in it for two years (4). They read in this class the following works on Rhetoric :—

1. Sahitya Darpana, 2. Kavya Prakasha, 3. Kavya Darshana, and 4. Rasagangadhara.

They also read those Poetical works which from want of time, they cannot go on with in the Sahitya Class. Besides this, they have for their exercise, translation and composition. They also attend the Mathematical Class.

With regard to this class, I beg leave to propose the following changes. The best books should be Kavya Prakasha and Dasharupaka. Generally Sahitya Darpana is the work read, but I prefer Kavya Prakasha and Dasharupaka on the following grounds. Kavya Prakasha is a much more profound work than Sahitya Darpana, and is

(4) Formerly the period of study in this class was one year which was extended to two years by order of the Council, dated the 28th November, 1846.

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acknowledged to be the highest authority on the subject. The best commentators, such as Mallinath, quote this work for their authority. The Sahitya Darpana dilates, in very diffuse style what the Kavya Prakasha contains in essence. Kavya Prakasha however speaks nothing of dramatical composition. Dasharupaka treats of that portion of Rhetoric. Besides, this is the highest authority in its own department.

Kavya Prakasha and Dasharupaka could be read in shorter time than Sahitya Darpana, so the former two have every claim, to be preferred to the latter, and after reading the two first, to read the last also would be waste of time. The purely literary works, should my suggestions regarding the studies of the Grammar and Sahitya departments be adopted, will not require to be studied as class-books in this (Rhetoric) class. The hours that will thus be saved from the immediate objects of the class should be devoted to the study of Mathematics and other works of which I will make mention afterwards.

4. JYOTISHA or MATHEMATICAL CLASS.

The students of the Sahitya and Alankara classes attend this class and study Lilavati and Vijaganita. Lilavati is a treatise on Arithmetic and Mensuration by Bhaskaracharya. Vijaganita is a treatise on Algebra by the same author. Both of these works are very meagre. They are in a great measure without any method, and do not contain all that is contained in similar English books. From a curious taste they have been rendered needlessly difficult. The rules and questions are all in verse. On account of this, the students take so great a length of time as four years to study (5th) these two books. The examples are too few.

(5) The chair of Mathematics was first created in June 1835. Down to 1835, the students of the Sahitya and Alankara classes attended this class as at present. In 1835, it

Great changes are required in this branch of study. For the present, complete treatises on Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry should be compiled from the best English works on those subjects. After studying these the students will be able to read *Lilavati* and *Vijaganita* with great facility. The higher branches of Mathematics should be attempted to be translated afterwards, and when ready should be adopted as class-books. I would propose that a popular treatise on Astronomy, such as Herschel's, be compiled in Bengali and be read in the Mathematical Class. These works might have been studied in English, but their appearance in Bengali will be of great use also in the Vernacular Schools. Besides the *Sahitya* and *Alankara* students, the students of the *Smṛiti* and *Nyaya* classes should also attend the lectures of the Professor of Mathematics.

Here, the Junior Department of the Sanscrit College is considered to terminate.

I beg leave to propose that the study of Bengali books, was made a separate class, *i. e.*, instead of the *Sahitya* and *Alankara* class students attending this class, the students of *Alankara* were prevented to this class and studied here for one year. In 1839, this arrangement was set aside and the *Smṛiti* and *Nyaya* class students were required to attend certain set hours. This arrangement was again put aside in April 1846, and the students of the *Sahitya* and *Alankara* classes were again made to attend this class, and that arrangement continues to the present day. From the very establishment of the class, *Lilavati* and *Vijaganita* were the text books. *Kshetratatwadipika*, a Sanskrit translation as contained in Hutton's Mathematics, was read in the class once for all in 1839. This book is not better than *Lilavati* and *Vijaganita*.

treating on useful and entertaining subjects be introduced in the classes of the Junior Department. The works should treat of such subjects as the following :—

FOR THE 4TH GRAMMAR CLASS.

Pretty stories about animals.

FOR THE 3RD GRAMMAR CLASS.

Rudiments of Knowledge as in Chambers's Educational Course.

FOR THE 2ND GRAMMAR CLASS.

Moral Class Book as in Chambers.

FOR THE 1ST GRAMMAR CLASS.

Miscellaneous subjects, such as Art of Printing, Loadstone, Navigation, Earthquake, Pyramid, Chinese Wall, Honey Bee &c.

FOR THE SAHITYA CLASS.

Biography as in Chambers, and Miscellaneous Reading on useful and entertaining subjects, selected and translated from Telemachus, Rassellas, Mahabharata &c.,

FOR THE ALANKARA CLASS.

Essays on Moral, Political, and Literary Subjects and a Popular Treatise on the Elements of Natural Philosophy.

Should the Council be pleased to introduce these Bengali Books, the students of the Sanskrit College will with little difficulty acquire great proficiency in Bengali, and through the medium of that language derive useful information, and thereby have their views expanded before they commence their English studies.

Of the above-mentioned Bengali works, Biography is already published ; Rudiments of knowledge and Moral Class Book are in the press, and almost all the other works are in the course of preparation. The adoption of these books will entail on the Council no expense whatsoever.

I beg also to state that the preparation and the publica-

tion of the Rudiments of Sanscrit Grammar in Bengali and that of the Sanskrit Selections shall need no pecuniary assistance of the Council.

The preparation of the works for the Mathematical Class, namely, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry and a Popular Treatise on Astronomy suitable for the use of the Sanskrit College will need the patronage of the Council of Education when the state of the Education Funds will admit of this being afforded.

5. SMRITI OR LAW-CLASS.

After the Alankara the students come to this class and continue in it for three years. The works read are :—

1. Manusanhita; 2. Mitakshara, 2nd Section; 3. Vivladachintamani; 4. Dayabhaga; 5. Dattakamimansa; 6. Dattakachandrika; 7. Ashtavinshati Tattwas.

The Institutes of Manu is the highest authority on the subject of Hindu Law. It treats of Social, Moral, Political, Religious, and Economical Laws. It is in a manner an index of Hindu Society in ancient times. Mitakshara by Vijnaneshwara is a commentary on Yajnavalkya's code. The 2nd Section treats of Civil and Criminal Laws, the former including the Law of Inheritance. Mitakshara is acknowledged to be the highest authority in the North-Western Provinces. Vivladachintamani by Vachaspati Mishra is a compilation of Civil and Criminal Laws. This work is the authority in the Province of Behar. Dayabhaga by Jimutavahana is a treatise on Inheritance. This work is the authority in Bengal. Dattakamimansa and Dattakachandrika are treatises in the adoption of children and their civil rights. The Mimansa is the authority in the North-Western Provinces and the Chandrika in Bengal. The Ashtavinshati Tattwas are by Raghunandana. With the exception of the Daya and Vyavahara Tattwas,—the former on the laws of inheritance, the latter on the Court

Procedure,—the other 26 Tattwas are Treatises on the forms of Religious Ceremonies. (6.)

With regard to this class, I beg leave to observe that the study of the 28 Tattwas ought to be discontinued. Though they are of use to the Brahmins as a class of priests, they are not at all fitted for an academical course. The other works should be allowed to keep their place. Their study makes one conversant with the Hindu Law of every part of India.

6. NYAYA CLASS.

The Nyaya system of Philosophy principally treats of Logic and Metaphysics and occasionally touches upon subjects relating to Chemistry, Optics, Mechanics &c. The same description applies more or less to the other systems excepting Mimamsa and Patanjala which treat of Religious Ceremonies and abstract contemplation of the Deity respectively. The years of study in this Class are four (7). The works studied are the following :—

1. Bhashaparichchheda ; 2. Siddhantamuktavali ;
3. Nyayasutra with Vrittī or commentary ; 4. Kusumanjali ;
5. Anumana Chintamani and Didhiti ; 6. Sabdashakti-prokashika ; 7. Paribhasha ; 8. Tattwakaumudi ; 9. Khanda ; 10. Tattvaviveka . (8)

(6). The 28 Tattwas were introduced by orders of the Council of Education, dated the 10th June, 1846.

(7). From 1824 to 1835 students from the Alankara class were promoted at their option either to the Nyaya or Smriti Class. For the remaining 5 or 6 years they studied in either of the classes, or such as liked, studying 1 or 2 years in the Nyaya class joined that of Smriti. In 1835 it was compulsory on every one to study 2 years in the Nyaya class and the remaining portion in Smriti. This continued up to 1846 when by orders of the Council of Education dated the 28th November the period was extended to 4 years.

(8) The books marked 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, were introduced by orders of the Council of Education, dated the 17th February, 1847.

Bhashapariichchheda by Vishwanatha Panchanana is an Elementary treatise on all the departments of Nyaya. Siddhantamuktavali is a commentary on the Bhashapariichchheda by the author himself. Nyaya Sutras are by Gautama, the founder of this School of Philosophy. Kusumanjali treats of the Existence of the Deity and that of a Future State. The line of argumentation on the whole is similar to what is to be found in modern European works on the same subject. The author is Udayanacharya. Anumana Chintamani is a work of the modern School of Nyaya Philosophy on Deduction by Gangeshopadhyay. His reasoning is similar to that of the schoolmen of the middle ages of Europe. This treatise is what Bacon would call a "Cobweb of Learning." In the study of this work insurmountable difficulties are to be met with. Anumana Didhiti is its commentary by Raghunath Shiromani. He is the Dictator in the modern Nyaya School of Philosophy. Shabdasaktiprakashika by Jagadhisha is a treatise on the import of words. Paribhasha by Dharmaraja is a short treatise on the Vedantic doctrines. Tattwa Kaumudi by Vachaspati Mishra is a short but comprehensive Treatise on the Sankhya system of Philosophy. Khandana is by Shriharsha. The object of the author in this work is to refute all the then existing systems of Philosophy and to establish his favourite, the Vedantic. This work is of high repute. The author has handled the subject in the most abstruse style and has actually made it what they call "Muddy Metaphysics." Tattwaviveka by Udayanacharya aims at refuting the Buddha or Athelstical doctrine and proving the necessity of a Maker of the Universe. The style of this work has the opposite faults of being abstruse and diffuse.

After the above reservations, I beg leave to suggest that this class instead of being called the Nyaya or Logic class be called the Darshana or Philosophy Class, and that the study of Anumana Chintamani and Didhiti, Khandana

and Tattwaviveka be discontinued and in their place be studied the following works, on the other systems of Philosophy excluding the Mimansa or Rule of Religious Ceremonies.

1. Sankhyapravachana ; 2. Patanjala Sutra ; 3. Panchadashī ; and Sarvvasarasangraha.

The period of study in the Sanscrit College is 15 years. One is expected to have a perfect knowledge of Sanscrit learning into long a period. But no one may be considered to have such knowledge who is not familiar with all the systems of Philosophy prevalent in India. True it is that the most part of the Hindu Systems of Philosophy do not tally with the advanced ideas of modern times, yet it is, undeniable that to a good Sanscrit scholar, their knowledge is absolutely required. Should the Council be pleased to adopt the suggestions that I will submit in the succeeding part of my report, regarding the English Department, by the time that the students come to the Darshana or Philosophy Class, their acquirements in English will enable them to study Modern Philosophy of Europe. Thus they shall have an ample opportunity of comparing the systems of Philosophy of their own with the New Philosophy of the Western World. Young men thus educated will be better able to expose the errors of ancient Hindu Philosophy, than if they were to derive their knowledge of Philosophy simply from European sources. One of the principal reasons why I have ventured to suggest the study of all the prevalent systems of Philosophy in India, is that the student will clearly see that the propounders of different systems have attacked each other and have pointed out each others errors and fallacies. Thus he will be able to judge for himself. His knowledge of European Philosophy shall be to him an invaluable guide to the understanding of the merits of the different systems.

7. ENGLISH DEPARTMENT (9).

The present mode in which this very useful department is conducted is very unsatisfactory. There is no rule as to what students are expected to study English : but it is entirely left to their own option. They commence the study when they please, leave it off at their own option and commence again when it suits their purpose. Many students on being attached to the Grammar Classes, at their first admission, immediately commence English, but from the difficulty of the first principles of both languages, the greater part being unable to carry on both at once, some after a short time neglect their English and others the Sanscrit. It is the case with many to retire from the English class just before the Examinations. The very same students come again to be admitted at the beginning of the next session. There is another circumstance which causes great confusion, which is that one English class is constituted of students of various Sanscrit classes. Take for instance, the components of the 3rd and 4th classes. The 3rd class consists of 13 boys, 4 of whom belong to the Smṛiti Class, 1 to the Nyāya, 1 to the Alankāra, 3 to the 3rd Grammar Class and 4 to the 4th Grammar Class. The 4th class consists of 33 boys, 2 of whom belong to the Alankāra Class, 5 to the Sahitya, 2 to the 1st Grammar Class, 6 to the 2nd, 10 to the 3rd, 6 to the 4th and 2 to the 5th Grammar Class. From the circumstance of students of various Sanscrit Classes coming to attend the English class, it becomes altogether a difficult affair to secure regular attendance in the latter. Again the study of English being optional, some portion only of each

(9) The English Department was first established in May 1827. It was abolished by the orders of the General Committee of Public Instruction in November 1835. It has been re-established in October, 1842 by the orders of the Council of Education.

Sanskrit Class are students in the English Department. Such students, particularly those from the lower classes, cannot go on with their Sanskrit studies with that degree of attraction which the non-English-reading students can. But the studies of the class being the same with all the progress in both the languages is greatly impeded.

The English Department if continued to be conducted in this irregular style, is not expected to be productive of any satisfactory results. After the creation of the English Department in this Institution a similar irregular mode of conducting it, rendered it useless which caused its abolition by the General Committee of Public Instruction. If better arrangements be not made, the present English Department will also become useless.

Under the above considerations I beg leave to suggest the following arrangement which, I am persuaded, if steadily pursued, will be productive of beneficial results. The arrangement I would propose is as follows :—The students should not be allowed to commence English till they have acquired some proficiency in the Sanskrit language. The pupils of the same Sanskrit Class shall go on with the same English studies. The study of English instead of being optional be compulsory. Should there be any one very unwilling to be taught in English, he be given to understand that he will not be allowed to commence English at the subsequent stage of his Sanskrit study, as to create for him alone a separate class is altogether out of the question.

Under the proposed system of Sanskrit study, the students of the sahitya class, it is assumed, will be well acquainted with the Sanskrit language. Therefore I beg leave to propose that the study of English be commenced in the Alankara class. In that case the students will be able to devote to the study of English nearly double the time they do now and their minds having received culture, they will not have to begin with such trite subjects as young

beginners are obliged to commence with. From the Alankara class to the last year of study in the College is some 7 or 8 years and a diligent student in the course of that period will have ample opportunity of making himself familiar with English language and Literature.

8. 5th GRAMMAR CLASS.

Another very important circumstance I beg to bring to the notice of the Council. The 5th Grammar Professor Pundit Kasinath Tarkapanchanana is not quite equal to discharge the duties of his class. He is an old Pundit and seems to be in his dotage. He is altogether unacquainted with that discipline which is absolutely required for so young a class as his. Being an old man, he will not bear to be directed, as is usual with all Pundits of his age.

From all these circumstances his class is the most irregular of all. Therefore I beg leave to propose that he be placed in charge of the library with his present salary Rs 40 a month, and the present Librarian, Pundit Girish Chunder Vidyaratna, a very distinguished ex-student of the Institution be appointed to the chair of the 5th Grammar Professor with his present salary 30 Rs a month to be raised to Rs 40 when a favourable opportunity offers.

PROMOTIONS.

With regard to the promotion of boys from one class to another, the present practice of the College is to keep them in each class for the allotted number of years and send them at the expiration of the time to the higher class without any consideration as to the degree of their acquirements.

Under this arrangement it so happens that a student not withstanding he may have finished his course in the class, is not allowed to join the higher one if he has not finished his allotted years, whilst another let him be how deficient soever in the studies of the class, is promoted to

the higher class simply if he has merely completed the prescribed time. Therefore I beg leave to propose that promotions take place on the Principle of merit, not years. Only with this limitation that no one will be allowed to remain in the College beyond the period prescribed by the scholarship rules. I am persuaded that under this arrangement, all students above mediocrity will finish their Collegiate course of study in less than the time now prescribed.

DISCIPLINE.

The laxity of general discipline in the Institution as present is notorious. It is highly desirable that strict and steady attention should be paid to regularity of attendance, to put a stop to students constantly leaving their classes on trivial pretences and to prevent needless noise, talking and general confusion. There is no inherent cause whatever why the discipline in this College should not be equal to that which obtains in any English Institution. The same methods require only to be enacted and enforced.

In conclusion, I beg leave to observe that the changes now proposed by me in the system of the College are the results of a long and anxious consideration in the subject. They are extensive, but I have endeavoured to select only those which are absolutely necessary for the efficiency of the Institution and which are quite practicable. Should the Council be pleased to adopt these suggestions I have sanguine hopes that the happy and steady effect, if it be under strict supervision, will be that the College will become a seat of pure and profound Sanscrit learning and at the same time a Nursery of improved Vernacular Literature, and of Teachers thoroughly qualified to dissinate that Literature amongst the masses of their Fellow Countrymen.

Sanskrit College
The 16th December
1830

}

I have &c
Sd. Isvar Chandra Shurma
Professor of Sahitya in the
Sanskrit College.

The report not only indicated devices and schemes of novel mode of instruction, but it also reviewed briefly the different branches of the Sanskrit Literature taught in the College. Such a learned brief review is not easily to be found in one and the same paper. The language of the report is easy and concise. All the necessary points have been properly arranged and explained in plain terms. The authorities highly commended the report and approved of it. Their fear of the early dissolution of the Institution vanished, and hope took the place of fear. Vidyasagar won great praise and admiration for his able report. In fact, after Vidyasagar, only Babu Bhudev Mukharji, and no one else, has been able to win such reputation for learned reports on educational matters.

The name of Babu Bhudev Mukharji, like that of Vidyasagar, should be cherished with feelings of regard and esteem in the heart of every native of Bengal. However different they might have been in character, conduct, views, opinions, or acts, they were greatly similar in powers of the mind, qualities of the heart, general capabilities, and in many other respects. They are equally memorable in the history of education of this country. Both won praise and admiration from the authorities for their, able learned reports. Both were employed in the education department. Both worked life-long for the cultivation and improvement of their

mother tongue. Both were liberal and generous. Both spent all their earnings for the good of the country, though in different ways and to different ends. Both were vastly erudite. Both are authors of a good many valuable works in Bengali. Both wrote learned reports on education, significant of their vast erudition and intelligence. To speak the truth, if they had done nothing else, merely these reports would have served to immortalise their names in the educational history of this land.

In fact, this report was the fundamental basis of Vidyasagar's official promotion and success in world. The Bengali books which he recommended in his report for introduction into the College as text-books, he intended compiling and publishing himself. He was only awaiting the permission of the authorities, and when that permission came, he began issuing the books, one by one.

CHAPTER XIII.

PRINCIPAL OF THE SANSKRIT COLLEGE.

When Babu Rassomoy Dutt saw, that Vidyasagar was charged with the report instead of himself, who was the Secretary to the College, and who, in ordinary course, ought to have been intrusted with the work, he thought naturally that the authorities were resolved to make Vidyasagar Secretary. He, therefore, deemed it advisable to resign his office beforehand, and, accordingly, sent

in his resignation letter, before the submission of the report by Vidyasagar. On the 4th January, 1851, Dr. Mouat, the Secretary to the Education Council, wrote a letter to Rassomoy Babu, accepting his resignation. In this letter he thanked Rassomoy Babu * for the able and faithful discharge of his duties, and, at the same time, requested him to make over the charge of his office to Vidyasagar. He also forwarded a copy of this letter to our hero. For the edification of the reader, we will quote here the letter at length :—

‘ No. 70.

“ *From*

THE SECRETARY, COUNCIL OF EDUCATION,

“ *To*

“ RASSOMOY DUTT ESQ.

Secretary, Sanskrit College.

“ Fort William, 4th January, 1851.

“ SIR,

“ I am directed by the Council of Education to accept your resignation of the office of Secretary of the Sanscrit College and to return you the thanks for the long period during which you have conducted its duties.

“ As the Council are anxious to relieve you at once from the duties of your late office, they will

* Since the establishment of the Sanskrit College, the following gentlemen held the office of its Secretary:—Todd, Marshall, Frere, Ramkamal Sen, and Rassomoy Dutt,

feel obliged by your making over charge upon receipt of this communication to Pundit Ishwur Chunder Shurma pending the sanction of Government to the permanent changes proposed and adopted by the Council.

" I have &c.

SD. F. J. MOUAT, M. D.

" Secretary, Council of Education.

" No. 71.

" Copy forwarded to Pundit Ishwur Chunder Shurma with directions to receive charge from Babu Rassomoy Dutt of the Office of Secretary to the Sanscrit College and to conduct its duties, pending the receipt of further orders.

" By order

SD. " F. J. MOUAT, M. D.

" Secretary, Council of Education."

Shortly after this, the offices of the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary were abolished, and, in their stead, the post of Principal was newly created with a monthly salary of 150 rupees. Mr. W. Seton-Karr, the then Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal, by his letter No 37, dated the 20th January, 1851, appointed Vidya-sagar as Principal of the Sanskrit College.

A true copy of the letter is given below :—

" No. 37.

„ From

" THE UNDER-SECRETARY TO THE
GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL,

" To

" PUNDIT ISHWAR CHUNDER SHURMA

" Dated Fort William, the 22nd January, 1851.

" SIR,

" I am directed by the Deputy Governor of Bengal to inform you that His Honour has been pleased this day to appoint you to be Principal of the Sanscrit College on a salary of Rs. 150 per mensem. I have &c.

SD. W. SETON KARR,

Vidyasagar's chief aim now was to improve the College. He applied himself, heart and soul, to remodel it and bring in proper method and regularity in all respects. First of all, he directed his attention to regulate the punctual attendance of the professors, who had again fallen into their old habits, since he had left the College on the former occasion. They observed no fixed hour of attending the College ; most of them were generally late. Nay, some of them came half an hour, or even a full hour, later. Almost all of them were Vidyasagar's teachers, and he had a great respect for them. But, at the same time, he had a keen sense of duty. He saw, that unless and until the teachers could be made regular and punctual, there was no hope for the College. He felt shy to tell them anything openly. But he must anyhow enforce regularity and punctuality in them, however painful the task might be. He tried various indirect means to bring them round, but without success. He then devised a new plan. He had at

that time, his quarters on the second floor of the College-building. As soon as the clock struck 10-30 A. M., which was the hour fixed for the commencement of business, he went round all the classes; and if he found that some of the teachers were not yet come (which, unfortunately was a daily occurrence.), he at once went out to the gates of the College, and there paced up and down in front of them. No sooner did the teachers approach him, one by one, than he saluted each with a greeting, asking, at the same time,—‘Do you come now, Sir?’ This, of course, put the teachers to great shame, and had the desired effect of rectifying their bad habits of late attendance.

He then bestowed his thoughts on the internal improvement of the College. He firmly believed, that the success of an educational institution depended mainly on the co-operation and good-will of the students. He also believed, that their good-will and co-operation could be secured only by kind and gentle treatment, which would serve to make them regular and punctual in attendance and more attentive to their studies. It was with this conviction, that he treated the students as if they were his own children. Referring to his treatment of the scholars, one of his pupils said one day to one of his friends :—“When we were students of the Sanskrit College, we saw Vidya-sagar generally living in the College building.*

* It is said, that during the great wide-spread agitation

After college-hours, a number of students used to go to him in his private quarters. He greeted them all with his usual kindness and affability, and conversed with them on various instructive and entertaining topics. He often fed them with sweets. He always gave friendly treatment to school-boys, whether they belonged to the Sanskrit College or to his own private schools. His practice was to address the students generally with the familiar expression *Tui* (the Bengali vulgar use of "Thou"). The sweet, kind address *Tui* made them feel happy and quite at home with him. In fact, that sweet utterance of *Tui* from his lips seemed to be full of pure, heavenly love and affection. On the one hand, as he was gentle and kind to the school-boys, on the other hand, he was equally severe and strict to them, when duty called for such treatment. It is needless to say, that the faithful discharge of duties sometimes requires the professors, teachers and authorities of schools and colleges to adopt severe and strict measures. But the severe mood of those, that are kind in nature, lasts for a short time only. Vidyasagar was naturally a

of the Hindu Widow Marriage, Vidyasagar generally passed his nights in the College-building, studying the various *Sastras* to look out for passages supporting his contention. In front of the College, stood Syama Charan Babu's house, where he sometimes supped, now and then supping in the College, as well. In the morning, however, he breakfasted at Raj Krishna Babu's. Syama Charan Babu was one of his greatest friends.

kind-hearted man. Duty sometimes compelled him to take to severity, but no sooner was the cause of his displeasure removed, than his gentle heart melted with his usual kindness. His face would then be illumined with an expression of heavenly beauty and lustre."

Vidyasagar was quite averse to infliction of corporal punishment. One day, he saw that the boys of one of the classes had been made by the professor to stand up. He called the teacher aside, and said to him humorously :—' You intend opening a dancing opera-party, eh ? You are training up dancers, are you ? Seems, you yourself will represent the chief actress,' The teacher, of course, was greatly abashed.

On another occasion, he saw a rod, upon the table of the same professor, and asked him what the cane was for. The teacher replied, that it was used in pointing out places in maps. Vidyasagar at once retorted very humorously :—' I see, you kill two birds with one stone. The rod serves both purposes. It is as convenient to use it in map-pointing as to lay it on the backs of the pupils.'

Vidyasagar was very witty. He never let go an opportunity, whenever one presented itself, of giving expression to merry droll remarks, without availing himself of it. Though in the performance of his duties, he was most serious and austere, yet, in social talk, he was most affable, courteous, merry and jocular. The combination of these two

different attributes is, no doubt, very beautiful, but it is rare, and is found only in a few very illustrious men, who have, by chivalrous or noble deeds, immortalised their names in the annals of history. It is said of General (afterwards *Pasha*) Gordon, the famous hero of Soudan, that in discharge of duties he was as grave and resolutely firm as a rock, but in private talks of leisure hours, he was a most amusing, witty fellow. In this respect, there is much similarity between Vidyasagar and Gordon. Both were heroes, though in different fields. Both were grave and serious in duty, but jocular and witty in society. One of Gordon's friends used to say of him that "He was the most cheerful of all my friends." Ananda Krishna Babu, speaking of Vidyasagar, said exactly the same thing.

We crave the indulgence of the reader to allow us to relate, in passing, a few incidents of Vidyasagar's merry witticism. He had a great friendly intercourse with Pandit Siva Nath Sastri's father, Harananda Bhattacharyya, whom he treated as if he (Harananda) were his (Vidyasagar's) own brother-in-law (Sister's husband). In his latter days, this Harananda had settled in Benares, but now and then came down to Calcutta on business. On one of these occasions, he paid Vidyasagar a visit. The host received his visitor with a most cordial greeting. When Harananda Bhattacharyya had taken his seat, and begun smoking

hooka, the host said to his visitor ;—‘I have been told that you were already dead.’ The other replied,—‘Why so ? Had I been dead how could I ever have come here ?’ The other rejoined :—‘Of course, I corroborate you. If you had *not* been dead, how could you have ever come here ? Please, see that you do not haunt me.’ The visitor smiled, and continued smoking. Vidyasagar again opened the conversation ;—‘So, you have, at last, selected Benares for your last days ? Could you not find a better place to die in ? Never mind, when you have already made the choice and are gone there, why do you leave it now and then ? You know the fate of those who settle down in Benares, but die outside its borders ?’ * The visitor replied :—‘Most certainly I am aware of it. But there’s no help. Pressure of business sometimes draws me down.’ The host rejoined :—‘Make haste; run back soon ; look sharp ; otherwise, you see there is a great difference between *within* and *without* Benares. By the way, have you acquired the habit of smoking *ganja* (Indian hemp) ?’ The visitor said,—‘Why that, what’s the use of *ganja* ?’ Vidyasagar replied,—‘Suppose, you die in Benares ; there is no doubt, in that case, that you will

* It is said, that those, who die within the precincts of Benares, are taken to *Sivaloka* (the abode of the god *Siva*), and are transformed, each to a *Siva* ; but he, who has once settled in Benares, and dies outside its boundaries, is transformed into an *ass*.

turn a *Siva*. Now, when you have been transformed into a *Siva*, Nandi and Bhiringi will, of course, give you a hookah of *ganja*, and you will have to smoke it. So that, unless you acquire the habit now, you will then die of suffocation, and you will be deprived of your much desired transformation.' A roar of laughter rose from the assembly and rent the walls of the room.

On another occasion, there was a social gathering in one of the parlours of Babu Raj Krishna Banarji. Among the visitors, were present Babu Dwarka Nath Mittir, a late judge of the High-Court, and Ray Krishna Das Pal Bahadur, the late famous editor of the 'Hindoo Patriot.' While every one was engaged in friendly talk, one of the neighbours was peeping into the room through a window. Vidyasagar noticed this, and, at once, sent for him. The man entered the room in great trepidation. Vidyasagar asked him why he had been peeping into the room. The man replied in a tremulous voice, with his head downwards, that he had heard that Judge Dwarik Mittir had come, and that he had been trying to catch a glimpse of the Judge. Vidyasagar said — 'Oh ! Indeed ! What's the use of peeping, then ? Come nearer, and I will show you him. Do you know this gentleman ? His name is Krishna Das Pal. Whoever is fairer than he in this company, is your Dwarik Mitter. Now tell me, if you have known him, and point him out ?' It may be mentioned

here for the information of the reader, that neither of the two gentlemen had a very fair complexion. A loud roar of merry laughter rent the vaults of the sky. The man was quite abashed, and left the room in great haste. Here Vidyasagar killed three birds with one stone.

Once on a time, several Pandits of Bhatpara, a renowned seat of Sanskrit learning in Bengal, came to Calcutta to receive their yearly allowances from a wealthy Hindu gentleman of the city. On their way back, they paid a visit to our hero. In course of conversation, one of the visitors said,—‘Now-a-days, the *Brahma-Teja* (superior influence) of the Brahmans has wholly vanished.’ Vidyasagar contradicted him, and said merrily, by way of joke,—‘What is it you say, sir? No, you are quite mistaken. On the contrary, it would be more correct to say, that it has redoubled now. Formerly your *Teja* was felt only when you approached any body; but, at the present day, your *Teja* (heat) is so intense, that no sooner you approach the gates of a rich man, than he begins to feel a burning sensation’ (meaning the wealthy Hindus of modern times do not like to countenance Sanskrit education by giving pecuniary aids to Pandits, as in days gone by). A roar of loud, merry laughter rose from the whole assembly.

Now, to resume our narrative. Though Vidyasagar was generally witty and humorous, he was

not the man to lose sight of his business. By repeated jokes for a few days, he brought the afore-mentioned professor to his senses, and made him forego his harsh treatment of the boys. Vidyasagar was not content with this. In a few days, he issued a circular order interdicting corporal punishment of the College-students.

In his later days, when he had retired from public service and opened his private Metropolitan College, he issued directions to the teachers of that institution not to give corporal punishment to the students, but to rectify their manners by kind and gentle treatment. The masters of the school department, however, did not act up to the instructions. They thrashed the boys as usual. When Vidyasagar's attention was drawn to it, he instituted an enquiry. One of the teachers admitted that he beat the boys. He was, therefore, made to retire.

We embrace this opportunity to narrate one or two incidents of his fond affection for school-boys, in general, of his later years.

On one occasion, he drove out all the boys of the second class of the Syambazar branch of his Metropolitan Institution for wilful disobedience. Duty compelled him to do away with the class altogether for that year. On the next morning, the boys waited upon him at his own residence, and earnestly prayed to be forgiven. The pitiful faces of the little boys and their earnest solicitations

moved his naturally gentle heart. His fearful wrath now turned into benign kindness. He addressed the boys with his usual affability, and said :—‘Very good, go now ;’ I excuse you this time, but mind, be careful not to do so again.’ A great burden was now removed from the minds of the boys, and they were highly delighted. It was then mid-day, the clock having then struck twelve. The boys took leave of Vidyasagar, and as they were alighting down the stairs, one of them most innocently and merrily said to the others, in a not very loud voice :—‘What an inhuman heart ! It is so late in the day, yet he has not thought fit to ask us to a little refreshment.’ The words reached Vidyasagar’s ears. He at once ran down, and overtook the boys while still on the stairs. He said to them :—‘Quite right, my dear boys ; surely, I have an inhuman heart. My mind was abstracted, and my attention not being drawn to it, I forgot to ask you to refreshment. Come, you must partake of a little refreshment. The boys were quite confused and bewildered. Some of them implored to be excused, while others tried to run down the stairs in great haste. But Vidyasagar told the porter to shut the gates, and took the reluctant boys to a room, where they were made to partake of the refreshment provided for them. They were then dismissed. When they had left the house, and were on the road, one said to the other :—‘How can such a man ever get angry ?’

On another occasion, it so happened that the boys of the vernacular department of the Calcutta Medical College (since converted into Campbell Medical School) were addressed by the then Principal of the College with some sweet notorious epithets of Macaulay. They were deeply grieved at the unmannerly conduct of the Principal, and banded together against him. They met in a field and formed a resolution, that until the Principal apologised for his impolite behaviour, they should not attend school. They were thus absent from the College for several months together. A great number of these boys were scholarship-holders, and depended solely on their stipends for their maintenance. They were, as a matter of consequence, put to great embarrassments. At last, they went in a band to Vidyasagar, and craved his assistance in the matter. He had already heard everything. He at first tried to induce them by persuasion to rejoin their school, but without success. Their spokesman, Bijay Krishna Gosvami, who was one of their number, said with great enthusiasm, that the boys were more eager for their self-respect than to seek for their convenience. Vidyasagar then yielded to their just request. He brought their prayer to the notice of the Lieutenant Governor, who directed the Principal to send for the boys and settle the matter amicably. Henceforth Vidyasagar had a great fond regard for the spirited Bijay Krishna Gosvami,

Now, to revert. Vidyasagar next directed his thoughts to the improper, one-sided practice then obtaining in the Sanskrit College, restricting the admission of boys of other castes than the Brahman, Kshatriya, and Vaidya. He saw the injustice of the restriction, and brought the matter to the notice of the Education Council. The authorities called on him for a report on the subject, which he submitted on the 20th. March, 1851. Among other things, he said something like this :—‘When the Vaidyas, who are no better than Sudras, are allowed to read in the College, I see no reason why the Kayasthas should not. Moreover, when Amrita Lal Mitra, a son-in-law of Raja Radha Kanta Dev Bahadur of Sobhabazar, and lately a student of the Hindu School, has been permitted to read in the Sanskrit College, there can be no reason why the other Kayasthas should not. That the Kayasthas are Kshatriyas, Raja Raj Narayan of Andul once tried to demonstrate. The Kayasthas belong to one of the respectable castes of Bengal. For the present, they should be permitted to read in the College.’ In another part of the report, he distinctly stated :—“The opinions of the principal professors of the College on this subject are averse to this innovation.” In fact, not only the teachers of the Sanskrit College, but also private professors of Calcutta and its neighbourhood had raised a hue and cry against this just innovation. Their chief contention was, that

if the sons of the lower castes were allowed to read Sanskrit, their Hindu religion would be polluted, But Vidyasagar refuted them by reasonable arguments, and by quotations of passages from the very *Sastras*. He asked the professors, that if they believed that the Sudras were not entitled to Sanskrit education, how was it then that Raja Radha Kanta Dev, who was as well a Sudra, could obtain instruction in Sanskrit, and the professors did not object to his discussion of the *Sastras* ? He also asked them, that when they were disinclined to teach Sanskrit to the Sudras and other low caste boys, how was it that they did not feel compunction in teaching the godly language to Europeans, who were no Hindus, and received, in return, money from them as wages ? In fact, he had to toil hard to carry his point by these and other means. He even went so far as to declare to one of his friends, that if he did not succeed in his attempts at this innovation, he would resign his office. But, fortunately, he had not to go so far. The authorities eapproved of his scheme, and they granted permission to take Kayastha boys into the College. It was some time after this, that the other Sudras were also permitted to read, in the Sanskrit College all other branches of the Sanskrit Literature save Theology.

The mental labour and anxiety that he has had to undergo in his endeavours to introduce these innovations and improvements into the College,

combined with the excessive grief and anguish that he had suffered at the untimely death of his two dear, little brothers, whom he had fetched to Calcutta for education, related above, brought on him a severe malady. Some five or six months after he had been made Principal of the Sanskrit College, he was, one day, seized with an acute head-ache, which gradually sat deep-rooted and was converted into severe, chronic head-disease. Medical treatments of different kinds brought on some relief, but failed to cure him radically. The malady however could not, at that time, completely over-power and disable him, for he had a very robust constitution. He used to engage himself daily in gymnastic exercises and other athletic sports, both morning and evening. He had thus such an excessive quantity of blood accumulated in his blood-vessels, that his medical attendants were afraid of his having some serious indisposition at no distant future. Dr. Nil Madhav Mukharji, therefore, twice opened the veins of his neck, and bled him profusely.

CHAPTER XIV.

PRINCIPAL OF THE SANSKRIT COLLEGE :—

FEMALE EDUCATION.

Shortly after he had been installed as Principal of the Sanskrit College, Vidyasagar had to meet with a most heart-rending, afflicting calamity in

the death of his sincere friend and well-wisher, Mr. J. E. D. Bethune, who had been a member of the Legislative Council and President of the Education Council, and who, in 1849, had established a girl-school in Calcutta for the propagation of female education in this country. In this matter, Vidyasagar had been a great help to Bethune, who had, therefore, made him Honorary Secretary of his newly established girl-school. Bethune was a great friend of the natives of the soil.

But it should be noticed here, in passing, that the establishment of the girl-school by Bethune for female education was not the first move in the direction. A girl-school, known by the name of "Juvenile Pathshala" had been started in 1820 through the exertions of the School Book Society. From the educational report for that year, it is seen, that nearly 40 girls of poor families obtained prizes for their proficiency. Raja Radha Kanta Dev Bahadur, in his report, said:—"Several native girls educated by the Female Society were also examined, whose proficiency in reading and spelling gave great pleasure." In 1842, there were fifty female schools in the different parts of Calcutta with nearly 800 pupils on their rolls. A detailed account of these schools is to be found in Raja Radha Kanta Dev's "Stri Siksha Vidhayaka," a manuscript paper in Bengali, which he offered to the Female Society. In this essay, he attempted to show, that female education had been customary

with the Hindus from a long time, and that even recently many Hindu females of higher classes had won much celebrity for their attainments and accomplishments. Among these, he named Rani Bhavani of Murshidabad, who had attained much proficiency in her mother tongue, and superintended the management of her estate affairs personally, and another celebrated Brahman lady, by name Hati Vidyalankar, who was so vastly erudite in the Sanskrit Literature, that, like other eminent scholars of the male sex, she appeared at the meetings of Pandits, and discussed *Sastric* matters. He also mentioned a third Brahman lady, named Syamasundari, of the Faridpore district, who had attained a great proficiency in the *Nyaya* philosophy. Her husband too was a profound Sanskrit scholar. Raja Radha Kanta, by these and other means, encouraged the education of the females of his nation. But, in a few years, several Hindus having been converted into the Christian faith, there arose a disagreement between the Hindus and the Christians, which had a great derogatory influence on the girl-schools started and worked on European principle. At this time, Bethune, the greatest friend of the black natives, particularly of their females, came forward to their rescue, and started, in 1849, a girl-school with 25 pupils, in the premises of Babu Dakshina Ranjan Mukharji of Sukea's Street. It was afterwards removed to a part of the Hare School building,

whence it was finally removed to its present site in Cornwallis Street, where it has now a building of its own. Bethune was a kind and generous man of respectable station and influence. He was, a sincere well-wisher of the natives. His idea was, that to raise the sons of the Hindus, one of the most ancient civilised nations of the world, from their fallen state, it was necessary that the females of the nation should be properly educated. His object was to give the pupils of his girl-school a decent instruction without the admixture of anything of Christianity with it. He had, therefore, given his school the name, "The Hindu Female School" which was subsequently changed to the "Bethune Female School," after the name of its founder.

When Bethune thus appeared in the scene of action, he was glad to find a black native co-operator and fellow-worker in the person of Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar. As president of the Education Council, Bethune had known him, for some time past, as a most talented, energetic, and painstaking worker, and had unbounded confidence in his words and actions. He was happy to find such a co-adjutor in the same field, and at once made him Honorary Secretary of his school. In this affair, Vidyasagar obtained assistance and co-operation of some of his friends and a few respectable, influential natives. Among them, the names of Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, Sambhu

Nath Pandit, Ram Gopal Ghosh, Raja Dakshina Ranjan, and some others, appear prominently. Most of them had sent in their daughters to the school, and co-operated so largely, that each of them might be separately called the founder of the institution. They had to suffer a great hardship at the hands of their countrymen ; particularly Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, who was even boycotted from society, as he was the pioneer of them all, having been the first to send in his daughters, Bhuvanmala and Kundamala. Even the news-papers of the time indulged in side-glances and inuendoes against these martyrs.

Bethune often visited his dear school, in company with Vidyasagar. Like David Hare, he used to take with him toys of a great variety for the little girls. He distributed the toys among the girls, and played with them, as if he was a little boy himself. Babu Jogendra Nath Bandyopadhyay, in his biography of Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, says that Bethune generally took the two girls, Bhuvanmala and Kundamala, to his house, and there patiently bore with their childish freaks of naughtiness. He also says, that Bethune's excessive fond attachment to these two little girls was the incentive that generated Lady Dalhousie's fondness for them.

One of Vidyasagar's chief merits was, that when he knew anything to be good and beneficial, he espoused its cause in right earnest, and applied

himself, heart and soul, to its furtherance. He sincerely believed, that female education was highly beneficial to his country, and he earnestly and diligently devoted his energies to its progress. Through his unremitting zeal, perseverance, and efforts, backed by the powerful influence and co-operation of the philanthropic Bethune, funds were raised for the stability of the institution, which wanted a building of its own. Bethune himself contributed largely to the building fund. It was the munificent Bethune, that bore the most part of the monthly establishment charges of the school, which were considerably great. It was he, who defrayed the cost of bringing the girls to school from their houses in a horse-carriage. In short, it was Bethune, who bore the greater part of the expenses.

The carriage, in which the girls were taken to school and back again to their houses, had the words “কন্যাপোষং পালনীয়া শিক্ষণীয়াতিষদ্ধতঃ” painted on it. The passage was selected and taken from the *Sastras* by Vidyasagar. It means that daughters too (like sons) should be carefully brought up and trained. Vidyasagar's idea was, that the passage would attract the eyes of his countrymen, who would thus see that the education of the females was not interdicted by the *Sastras*, but rather made an obligatory duty for every householder. But, unfortunately, his countrymen were tightly bound down by the customs of the country. They

did not venture to try to get loose from that bond, and open their eyes to pry into the true intent of the *Sastras* and act up to it. Vidyasagar, therefore, could not secure the co-operation of the Hindus in general. He had to row hard against the tide. However, through the disinterested exertions of some of his friends and influential Europeans, he succeeded in his attempts a great way.

In 1851, Bethune got an invitation to visit the girl school of Janai, a village some 12 miles from Calcutta. It was the rainy season of tropical Bengal, but the philanthropic Bethune did not mind it. On his way to the place, he met a heavy shower of rain, and he was drenched to his skin. With great difficulty he reached Janai, but this was his last work. That very day he had an attack of Pneumonia, which carried him off. The sad news came upon Vidyasagar like a thunder-bolt. He was so much grieved at the death of his dearest friend, that he once resolved to cut off his connection with the girl school, which bore not only Bethune's name, but also other gifts from him, and to give up his honorary post of the secretary ; but at the request of the authorities, he had to continue in his office till 1869. Vidyasagar had such a fond regard for Bethune, that he had the latter's portrait hung on his own walls.

Vidyasagar treated the little girls of the school as if they were his own daughters. He was kind and lovely by nature. He greeted them cheerfully

and affectionately, some with the address of 'mother,' some with 'sister,' some with 'aunt'. On one occasion, Raja Dinkar Rao visited the school in company with Vidyasagar, and gave 300 rupees for distribution of sweets to the pupils. Cecil Beadon, the president of the School Committee, was afraid that the eating of a large quantity of sweets might generate their disorder of bowels. He forbade distribution of confectionery. Vidyasagar then determined to give them clothes, instead of sweetmeats. He consulted his *mothers, sisters, and aunts*, all of whom liked the idea. Accordingly he gave them each a piece of fine, Dacca-made Sari (female cloth). Even after he had given up his honorary office of the Secretary, Vidyasagar had the school most at heart. But subsequent difference of opinions with respect to mode of instruction made him, in his later days, averse to the institution.

As Principal of the Sanskrit College, Vidyasagar introduced another great innovation into the institution. Heretofore, the students of the College were all free, that is, they had to pay no tuition-fee. Vidyasagar saw the injustice of the practice. His idea was, that only poor boys, who were unable to afford to pay tuition-fee, should be permitted to read free, and not the sons of well-to-do families, who had sufficient means to pay. Besides, he was afraid, that unless some fees were realised from the students, the authorities, at any

time, might, on pretexts of economy, abolish the institution altogether. These considerations led Vidyasagar to bring the matter to the notice of the Education Council. The authorities approved of his scheme, and the system of fees was newly introduced into the College. It was ruled, that hence-forth all new-comers must pay tuition-fee, only a limited number of free studenships being reserved for poor boys.

Another of his most important acts, on his installation to the post of Principal of the Sanskrit College was to get the worm-eaten, time-worn manuscripts on Belles-lettres in the Library of the College printed. If he had not, at that time, taken up the matter, most probably the manuscripts would have disappeared. Besides these, he struck off a reprint of all the philosophical works.

He now directed his attention to the publication of his own compositions. On the 6th April, 1851, appeared his *Sisusiksha, Part IV*. It was a Bengali version of Chambers's "Rudiments of Knowledge." It was originally intended for the girls of the Bethune School. Its language is easy and plain, though some of the words used are a little too stiff for those for whom it was intended. Like the original, it deals with diverse subjects instructive to young children. The name of the book was afterwards converted to its present name *Bodhoday*. It was, at first, titled "Sisusiksha, Part IV," because Madan Mohan Tarkalankar had al-

ready issued his "Sisusiksha, Parts I, II, III", all of which Vidyasagar had obtained the copyright of, at the time of his separation from Tarkalankar, referred to in a previous chapter.

He next devoted his thoughts to the publication of the text-books for the Sanskrit College, which he had suggested in his lengthy report to the Education Council. On the 16th November, 1851, appeared his *Upakramanika Vyakarana*, the groundwork of which, it may be still fresh in the reader's memory, he had built by a few hours' toil in the night, for the use of his dear pupil and friend, Raj Krishna Banarji. Although its compilation was made in imitation of the summary of the "Sankshiptasar Vyakarana," it must be admitted, that it clearly displays his fertile, creative genius. Although it cannot bring about a sound knowledge of Grammar, there is no doubt that it has shown the easiest way to the attainment of Sanskrit. Pandit Ramgati Nyayratna, one of the best Sanskrit scholars, and late Head Master of the Hugli Training (Normal) School, says :— 'It must be said that Vidyasagar, by the compilation of his "Upakramanika" and other similar grammars dressed in Bengali, has brought about a new era in Sanskrit education. Formerly, many English-educated learned men wished for a little knowledge of Sanskrit, but they could not approach it, for fear of the grim, fierce-looking Grammar that stood in the door-way. Vidyasagar has cleared

that way. It is his "Upakramanika" that has enabled the young and the aged, whether in the town or in the country, to obtain some knowledge of Sanskrit. If they had to begin with an original Sanskrit grammar, how many of them would have the fortune to learn the language? In fact, if Vidyasagar had done nothing else, he would still have won the gratitude of the natives for clearing the way to Sanskrit by the compilation of his "Upakramanika" and other similar grammatical works.'

Vidyasagar has done one great good to the schools of this country. To his credit it must be said, that it was he who introduced the practice of summer vacation into all the schools and colleges of Bengal. He saw that it was very difficult for both students and their teachers to work in the school during the sultry months of May and June, when the heat was quite unbearable. He brought the matter to the notice of the authorities praying for summer vacation, which was granted him. For this act of universal good, the educational institutions of Bengal will ever remain grateful to Vidyasagar.

On the night of the 11th May, 1852, a robbery was committed in Vidyasagar's house at Birsingha. He was then at his native village, enjoying the summer vacation. The reader has already been acquainted with Vidyasagar's love for humanity and unbounded benevolence, combined with liberality,

His practice, when at home, was to visit to each house in the village, and succour the distressed wherever he found one. He gave food to the hungry, clothes to the naked, help and medicine with proper diet to the diseased. In this way he walked over the village, day and night, distributing alms. He helped with money those poor persons of higher classes, who felt ashamed to beg in public. A rumour, therefore, had got up in the neighbourhood, that Vidyasagar was immensely rich. The foolish could form no idea of the greatness of his heart. They had not the power to comprehend, that a philanthropic, liberal man spends every pice that he earns for the succour of the needy. The robbers got scent of the rumour, and had also the information, that Vidyasagar was come home from Calcutta with a good, round sum of money. In fact, they had no idea that Vidyasagar was not a man to save his money, or that he lived from hand to mouth, and laid out all his savings on charities, without reserving a single pice for himself and family. They broke open the gates of his house at midnight, and entered into it. They were about 30 or 40 in number. Vidyasagar was in great peril. Though he was very robust and strong, it was not possible that he could cope with so many fierce robbers, all armed with swords, spears, and clubs. He at once fled through the back-door with his parents and all the family, and thus saved their lives. The robbers looted, at their

pleasure, everything they could lay their hands on. When they had departed with their booty, Vidyasagar sent information of the occurrence, that very night, to the neighbouring Police Station of Ghatal, his sub-district.

On the next morning, the *Daroga* of Police (a most notorious department of the Government of India even to the present day), arrayed in his best uniform, appeared on the scene. When he heard that there was no chance of blackmail there, he lost his temper, and began to display annoyance at matters most trivial. Vidyasagar's father, old Thakurdas, approached him, and said :—‘ As you are the son of a *Kulin* Brahman, I may give you something as a token of respect on that account, but I cannot pay you a single pice in thi affair (meaning, the enquiry of the robbery).’ With this, Thakurdas left him, and went out to make purchases of necessary plates and clothes. His eldest son (Vidyasagar), in cōmpany with his younger brothers and some youths of the village, engaged himself in athletic sports in front of his house. The Police Officer waxed wrathful at what seemed to him to be nothing short of insolence on the part of Vidyasagar. He thus expressed himself :—‘ How is it that the Brahman (meaning Thakurdas) is so bold as to declare openly before my presence, that he will not pay me a single pice ; and how strange is it, that his unknown eldest son, (pointing to Isvar Chandra), ‘ that young fellow, is

apathetic about the occurrence, and is engaged in sports ; what sort of a man is he ?' At this, one of his subordinates came forward and cautioned him, that he was not an ordinary, vulgar man, that the Deputy Magistrate of Jehanabad paid him visits and showed him due respect, and that he had an intimate friendship with the Governors. The Daroga was now greatly terrified. He was a coward. Cowards are apt to show courage, where there is no fear of danger, but they have no true courage and are always afraid to approach a bold man. As soon as he heard that Vidyasagar was a great man, connected with most influential bodies, all his arrogance and wrath vanished in an instant. He precipitated his retreat, and soon left the field of action.

When he returned to Calcutta, after the vacation, Vdiyasagar had an interview with Halliday, the then Deputy Governor of Bengal. In course of conversation, he introduced the story of the robbery. The Governor accused him of his cowardice in leaving the house to the robbers and flying for life with his family. In reply Vidyasagar said to the following effect :—' Your Honour may now accuse me of cowardice. But supposing, I had faced the numerous armed robbers single-handed, I was sure to give my life. In that case, your Honour would have been the first to say, what a fool Vidyasagar was to meet rashly so many robbers and sacrifice his life for the sake of trifles, Now that I have

saved my life and have been able to appear before you, your Honour calls me a coward. From this it is clear, that it is no easy thing to please you, great men.' Halliday was greatly pleased with the open frankness of Vidyasagar.

To show that Vidyasagar was never thrifty and that he spent his earnings on charity, we will relate here, in passing, an incident of his later years.

In 1868, when Mr. Harrison went to Midnapore on investigation as an Income Tax Commissioner, he had an occasion to visit Birsingha. Vidyasagar was, at that time, at his native village. He informed his mother of Harrison's advent, explaining, at the same time, the purpose for which he had come. She asked her son to invite the young civilian to dinner. Vidyasagar informed Harrison of his mother's request, but the latter declined it, saying that he would not go to his, unless invited by the mistress of the house. Vidyasagar's mother then sent him an invitation letter, and Harrison, in response, appeared before her in person. First of all, he bowed down his head at the matron's feet, and saluted her according to the custom of the Hindus. The elderly lady blessed him, as if he was his own son. He then squatted down to dinner on a low, wooden stool, as is the practice with the natives of Bengal. Vidyasagar's mother took her seat beside the civilian, and pointed out to him the various dishes, which she had prepared with her own hands, in successive order, to eat from. Harrison

was highly delighted with the delicious dishes, and thanked her profusely. He could speak Bengali tolerably well, and was engaged in conversation with his hostess on various topics. At the conclusion of the talk, he asked Vidyasagar's mother, how much gold she had. The mother answered :—' How much? Why, I have four pitchers of gold.' Harrison was startled to hear of so much wealth ; he could not grasp the real meaning of her words. Vidyasagar's mother then pointed to her four sons, who were standing by, saying, 'These are my four pitchers of gold.' Harrison was quite dumb-founded. He could give utterance to no word. At last, he said to Vidyasagar :—' She must be an uncommon woman. She is second Cornelia of Rome.' In fact, Vidyasagar was so liberal and open-handed, that he never cared to be thrifty.

But, to retrace. Contemporaneously with his "Upakramanika," appeared his *Rijupatha, Part I*. The prefaces to both the works bore the same date, viz. 16th November, 1851. The book is neither an original composition, nor a translation. It is only a selection book, containing extracts from easy Sanskrit prose and poetical works. The selections are very nice and judicious. It is one of the best elementary books for beginners.

Before he was made Principal of the Sanskrit College, Vidyasagar had commenced a Bengali version of Chambers's "Moral Class Book," with the title, *Nitibodha*. But for want of time, he could

not finish it, and he made over its right to his dear friend and pupil, Raj Krishna Banarji. In the preface to the book, dated 18th July, 1851, Raj Krishna Babu says : —

‘In conclusion, I acknowledge with thanks, that Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar has taken much pains to make corrections throughout, and that because he had done so, I venture to publish the book. It is necessary to mention here, that it was he who began to write this book. “Conduct towards Children,” “Conduct towards Family,” “Conduct towards Superiors and Inferiors,” “Industry,” “Self-reflection and Self-reliance,” “Presence of Mind,” “Modesty,”—these pieces are his composition. Of the illustrations to each piece, that of Napoleon Bonaparte is his composition. But, for want of time, he charged me with the completion of this book, and in compliance to that requisition, I applied myself to it.’

We will embrace this opportunity to notice here Vidyasagar’s *Kathamala*. It contains many fables, narrated in the form of conversation between lower animals, in imitation of “Æsop’s Fables,” intended to impart moral instruction to young children, to whom it is a very agreeable book. It is also a translation, but the translation is as excellent as could be.

On the 4th March, 1852, appeared his *Rijupatha, Part II*. This is also a selection-book, com-

piled from easy Sanskrit prose and poetical works. It is a nice elementary book for beginners.

When these books were published, the new scheme of imparting instruction, suggested in his report, quoted above, was adopted in the Sanskrit College, under orders of the authorities.

Vidyasagar's *Rijupatha, Part III* appeared in 1853. This is also a selection-book, but the selections are very nice. Most of the pieces have been taken from such easy and plain, old Sanskrit works as the "Panchatantra," the "Hitopadesa", the "Ramayana," and the "Mahabharata." It was, for many years, prescribed as a text-book for the candidates for the Entrance-Examination of the Calcutta University.

In the same year, appeared his *Vyakarana-Kaumudi, Parts I and II*, and in the next year, *Part III* of the same book. These three parts of the "Kaumudi" are a step higher than the "Upakramanika." It has been a great help to the students of Sanskrit, though not bringing so sound a knowledge, as the *Mugdhabodha*, *Panini*, or other similar grammatical works.

After this, commenced the full working of the scheme, suggested in the report. Referring to it, Pandit Ramgati Nyayratna says :—

'Formerly, English was an optional subject for the students, but henceforth it was made compulsory in the higher classes. As to Sanskrit, the *Mugdhabodha* was done away with in the lower

classes, and, in its stead, the Upakramanika and the three parts of the Kaumudi, compiled in Bengali by Vidyasagar, were introduced. With these were also introduced the three parts of the Rijupatha, compiled from such works, as the Panchatantra, the Ramayana, the Hitopadesa, the Vishnupurana and the Mahabharata. At this time, several intelligent boys, who had begun Sanskrit with the Upakramanika went up to the higher classes with leaps and bounds. Consequently, Vidyasagar paid no attention to the former proposal of imparting instruction in the Siddhanta-Kaumudi after the study of these grammars written in the vernacular.'

This policy helped to make the entrance to Sanskrit easy, and to confirm the stability of the College, but the attainment of a perfect Sanskrit education receded a great way. Henceforth very few students of the College have been able to acquire a profound knowledge of the Sanskrit Literature.

Vidyasagar was not content with merely writing and publishing his own Bengali books. He joined some of the associations that were, at that time, engaged in compiling and publishing textbooks, and he encouraged them in different ways. He had some influence with the School Book Society and Vernacular Literature Society of the time, which issued a rule that authors intending to get their works published, must forward specimens

of their books to Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar and Rev. Robinson, who should examine them first, and if approved by them, they were then to be forwarded to Rev. Long, who should read them in his village-school, and there settle whether the books were intelligible to village boys. Besides Vidyasagar, such illustrious persons of the time, as Wyllie, Colvin, Seton-Karr, Bayley, Pratt, Long, Woodrow, Radha Kanta Dev, Jay Krishna Mukharji, Rassomoy Dutt, were connected with the said association.

In 1853, Vidyasagar founded a free School in his native village, Birsingha, and attached to it a night school for the education of the sons of the cultivating class in the night. He purchased a plot of land for the site of the school out of his own funds. He paid the sole cost of the school building. He himself laid the foundation stone of the building. A girl-school was also started by him about the same time. He defrayed all the expenses for these schools out of his own purse. His free school cost him nearly four hundred rupees every month, 300 rupees as pay of the teachers and 100 rupees in purchase of books and slates for poor boys, and articles of furniture and Library books for the school. The night and the girl-schools cost him between 40 to 45 rupees a month. Besides these schools, he established, about this time, a charitable dispensary, in his native village, for treatment of poor patients, who received free visits, in

serious cases, from the medical officer in charge, and medicines free of cost from the dispensary. This charitable institution cost him nearly one hundred rupees a month. All these expenses he met from his own purse. But the question is, how could he make means to meet them? The new scheme of instruction introduced by him into the College met with the approbation of the Education Council, and was productive of better results. The numerical strength of the College rose considerably. The authorities were satisfied with the working of the scheme, and, in January, 1854, they raised his pay from 150 to 300 rupees a month. His monthly income from the sale of his books averaged between four to five hundred rupees. So that, it is clearly seen that what he earned, he spent on charitable purposes, leaving no margin for times of need. He was liberal by nature, and he could not think of being thrifty.

CHAPTER XV.

PRINCIPAL OF THE SANSKRIT COLLEGE, AS WELL
AS, SPECIAL INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS.

In 1855, when the authorities resolved to start Government-aided English and Vernacular schools in the different parts of the country, they called on Vidyasagar for a report on the mode of instruction to be followed in these schools, and the scheme under which they were to be worked. Vidyasagar

submitted an able report on the subject, which met with the approbation of the authorities. They then appointed him a Special Inspector of Schools on a monthly pay of 200 rupees in addition to his pay of 300 rupees for holding the post of the Principal of the Sanskrit College. He had thus a monthly salary of 500 rupees now. He was intrusted with the establishment and inspection of schools under the new scheme in the interior of the districts, Nuddea, Midnapore, Hugli and Burdwan.

In his second report, Vidyasagar had suggested the opening of a Normal School to train up teachers for the newly established schools. The authorities saw the propriety of his suggestion, and, in the same year, a Normal School was opened in the premises of the Sanskrit College. Vidyasagar was charged with its management. At his instance, his dear friend, the famous author, Akshay Kumar Datta was appointed its first Head Master. Not long after this appointment, Akshay Babu was afflicted with a severe head disease, which grew so serious, that he was compelled to resign his office. Vidyasagar's great favourite, Ram Kamal Bhattacharyya, was then appointed to the post. Madhu Sudan Vachaspati, one of Vidyasagar's early play-mates, was also another teacher of the Normal School.

As Inspector of Schools, he had usually to travel into the interior of the Hugli, Burdwan, Midnapore and Nuddea districts, and to come in

contact with many wealthy and influential persons of the places he visited. He advised these respectable men to establish schools in their localities and estates. In this way, he made an acquaintance of Babu Jay Krishna Mukharji, the learned Zemindar of Uttarpara.

During these tours, Vidyasagar generally travelled in palanquins, and if he found any sick person, faint and feeble, lying on the way, he used to alight from his vehicle and take the poor sufferer into it. He then walked on foot himself to the next inn, where he placed the poor man under the care of the inn-keeper, giving him sufficient money to feed, and take care of, the sufferer. He never travelled without money in his purse. He always kept with him a stock of a sufficient quantity of coins of different values. Whenever a poor person presented himself, he was sure to give him some money in proportion to his need. He never sent away a beggar displeased.

Vidyasagar's heart was a fountain of sympathy and kindness. The tale of distress moved his naturally gentle heart, and he tried his utmost to relieve the distress. There is no reckoning how many orphans he helped with food, books and school-fees. Whenever the tale of a poor boy reached his ears, that for want of means, the boy was prevented from obtaining education, he never failed to take the boy to his own house, and make proper arrangements for his education. It is said, that on one

occasion, when he had gone on business to the house of Kali Krishna Datta of Dattapukur, a village in the district of 24 Pergannas, a poor Brahman orphan appeared before him, and, with tears in his eyes, narrated his sad story. Vidyasagar was so much touched at the tale of distress, that he wept like a child. He then took the poor boy with him to his own residence, and provided for his education. At this time, nearly one hundred persons were daily fed by him, both in Calcutta and at Birsingha.

We have said, that Vidyasagar never sent away a beggar without giving him or her some alms. The reader has already seen how fondly devoted he was to his mother. When a beggar appeared before him, and said that he was motherless, the very thought of the loss of mother drew tears from Vidyasagar's eyes, and he was sure to give the mendicant something more than he expected. On one occasion, it so happened that a beggar came to him, and represented falsely that he was motherless, under instructions of a neighbouring grocer. Vidyasagar came to know that his statement was untrue, and that he had, in reality, his mother living. He did not, however, send the beggar away, but gave him some alms, and advised him not to tell lies again. In fact, many poor persons thus deceived him with false representations that they were motherless, and drew out from his purse, money more than they expected.

Vidyasagar was, as if, spell-bound with the word 'mother.' He had never a very great taste for music. But whenever he heard any one sing a song, containing pitiful addresses of 'mamma', he was moved to the very core of his heart. He clasped the singer to his bosom, and did not know how to satisfy him. A poor, blind Mussulman beggar was in the habit of wandering in the streets a-begging and singing *Syama-Sangits* to his violin. These songs contained in them pitiful addresses of 'mamma,' which moved the filial heart of Vidyasagar. He used to send for this beggar, and hear his songs. As he heard the pitiful cries of 'mamma', tears flew in torrents from his eyes. He helped the Mussulman beggar liberally. When the poor, blind man's hut was destroyed by fire, Vidyasagar paid the whole cost of his new hut.

As was the son, so were the parents. Vidyasagar's father and mother, both were liberal to the core. They felt a great delight in feeding guests and hungry people. The father personally used to go to market and make purchases for the daily feast, and the mother took equal delight in doing the cooking and distributing the food to the guests and the hungry. Many stories are told of their liberalities. Vidyasagar's parents lived to a good old age and enjoyed the happiness of their conjugal love. But it is usually seen in the world, where there is excessive love between two persons, especially between husband and wife, the fancied

slightest disregard of one, either in words or acts, wounds the pride of the other, who takes it to be an affront offered, and enters into dispute with the fancied opponent. Such was the usual occurrence with Vidyasagar's father, Thakurdas, and his mother, Bhagavati Devi. The reader is already aware that the husband, Thakurdas, was of a peevish temperament. His wife, Bhagavati Devi, also easily lost her temper. Consequently, their conjugal dispute was almost a daily occurrence, but it never had a long duration. When the quarrel grew rather serious, Bhagavati Devi used to shut the doors of her room, and lay there, giving vent to her pent up passion by angry words mixed with tears. Thakurdas would then be in great peril, but he had always a remedy, ready at hand. As soon as his beloved consort entered the room, he left the house and went out in search of a big fish. Having procured one to his mind, he returned home with it, and, with a heavy bang, threw it down, with great force, on the ground in front of his wife's room. No sooner did the sound of the big fish reach her ears, than Bhagavati Devi, at once ran out of the room, and with a large fish-knife began dividing the fish, with a smile in her tearful eyes. How beautiful was the admixture of tears with mirth ! Thakurdas, with wilful wickedness, would peremptorily tell her not to touch the fish, but his wife would not pay the slightest heed to his interdiction, and thus won the victory. The other

female inmates of the house were greatly amused, and smiled at the happy, speedy termination of the old couple's quarrel. Referring to this, Vidyasagar's son, Narayan Babu, said to us :—"My grandmother (Vidyasagar's mother) used to lend money to the lower class people of the village. When any of these poor persons could not repay their debts, she would go to their houses, and sometimes demand repayment in angry tones. She would say to them,—'If you do not repay your debts, how can I carry on the money-lending business ?' When the creditors saw her in such passion, they tried to pacify her with gentle, flattering words. Some would relate, with tearful eyes, the tales of their distress ; while others blessed her son, Vidyasagar, in her presence, and prayed to God for his welfare. My grandmother's passion would vanish in an instant ; she would then say,—'Very good, never mind, pay your debts, when you find convenience. But to-day you must have *Prasad* (eat your rice) at mine.' The female inmates of their house sometimes gave her *Muri* (fried rice), cocoanut, *Batasa* (light sugar-cake) and other eatables. She would bring them home wrapped in a corner of her cloth. At noon, after she had done the cooking and fed the guests and dependents, she took her stand daily by the outer gates of her house. As a wayfarer or a peddler passed by her, she would take him in, and feed him with satiety. If she saw any one with a pale

face, she would say to him.—‘Oh ! you have had nothing to eat to-day. Come, come to my house, I will feed you. Whenever she got a big fish, her delight knew no bounds. She was very happy to divide large fishes with her own hands, and to feed people with them.

The reader has already seen that Vidyasagar was a great appreciator of merits. Besides, he was ever prepared to help the deserving in the way which would best suit the helped. He had known Babu Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari for a long time. Prasanna Kumar had been a student of the Hindu College, where he had won a gold medal, besides a monthly scholarship of 40 rupees. He had gone to Dacca on appointment, which not suiting him, he had come back to Calcutta without the permission of the authorities, who were consequently highly dissatisfied with him. At last, at the earrest request of Vidyasagar, he was appointed as one of the lower teachers of the Hindu College on a monthly salary of 40 rupees. Subsequently, when the scheme of English instruction in the Sanskrit College was approved by the Education Council, and English was made a compulsory subject, Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari, at the instance of Vidyasagar, was appointed first teacher of English in the Sanskrit College, and after him Babus Srinath Das, Kali Prasanna Chatarji, Tarini Charan Chatarji and Prasanna Kumar Ray were appointed teachers of English.

This Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari afterwards became Principal of the Sanskrit College, and ultimately, one of the professors of the Presidency College, Calcutta.

We will notice here, in passing, the incident connected with Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari's resignation of his office as Principal of the Sanskrit College. Some malicious persons insinuate that he resigned the post at the instigation of Vidyasagar. We will show that he had nothing to do with the resignation. On the contrary, he tried his best to induce Prasanna Kumar to withdraw his resignation.

Shortly after Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari had been installed as Principal of the Sanskrit College, he had a dispute with the Principal of the Presidency College on official matters. The Library of the Sanskrit College had all along been in a room on the second floor of the College-building. But the Principal of the Presidency College requiring it on urgent business, he directed the Library of the Sanskrit College to be removed to a damp, dark room in the lowest floor. The Library contained a good collection of valuable and rare books and manuscripts. Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari objected to the removal of the Library, on the score that the damp might cause a great injury to the rare collection. The Principal of the Presidency College was a white European. He referred the matter to the higher authorities, who decided

in his favour, as is the usual occurrence in cases of dispute between a black native and a white European. The Library was removed to the damp, dark room. Prasanna Kumar naturally took this to be a downright insult, and highly resented it. From his long connection with Vidyasagar, he had acquired much of his habits and spirit. He at once sent on his resignation letter. We will now quote some portions of the letters that passed between Vidyasagar and the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, which speak for themselves.

(I)

“ MY DEAR SIR,—

“ When I had the pleasure of waiting upon you last, you were pleased to allude to the resignation of the officiating Principal of the Sanskrit College. But as I was not aware of all the circumstances connected with the affair, I could not tell you anything regarding the matter. I have since made myself acquainted with the facts of the case, and am inclined to think that the treatment of the Principal by * * * has been unnecessarily and unbecomingly harsh, as will, I believe, appear to you also on perusal of the papers enclosed. * *

* * *

“ I have, therefore, tried my best to persuade him to withdraw his letter of resignation. But he says * * *

(SD). “ ISVAR CHANDRA SARMA.”

(2)

‘MY DEAR PUNDIT, -

“ I am sorry you have not been able to induce P. C. Sarbadhicari to withdraw his resignation, because I feel sure it is a step which he will regret, and I am always sorry to lose the services of good officers, especially if it be for an inadequate cause. * * *

“ As to the fitness of the room for the reception of the Sanskrit Mss. I will make enquiry.

“ Believe me yours sincerely,

(Sd). “ CECIL BEADON.”

(3)

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ As I am inclined to suspect that he may have also represented the matter to you in the same light, I beg to assure you that I had no hand whatever in inducing Babu P. C. Sarbadhicari in forming his resolution. On the contrary, as I was under the impression that the severance of his connection with the Sanskrit College would be injurious to that institution, I tried my best to make him withdraw his resignation, though without the desired effect.

(Sd.) “ ISVAR CHANDRA SARMA ”

(4)

“ My dear sir,

“ You may be quite sure that if I had had the least suspicion that Babu P. C. Sarbadhicari had acted under your advice in resigning his appoint-

ment in the Sanscrit College, I should not have asked you to try and induce him to reconsider what I thought a hasty and unasked for step.

“Yours Sincerely

(Sd.) “C. Beadon”

Shortly after English had been made a compulsory subject, and the students had been compelled to keep pass-marks in English as well, the Calcutta University was instituted, and along with it, the system of Entrance and Arts examinations was introduced. Some more English teachers were, therefore, appointed in the Sanskrit College. About this time, one Kali Charan Ghosh, a mere youth, became Vidyasagar's especial favourite. Though he was young in age, he had acquired a good English education. Vidyasagar, therefore, appointed him temporarily as teacher of English, on probation.

But, when the boys saw that their teacher was of the same age with them, they refused to take lessons from him. Besides, some of them tried to treat him with unbecoming contumacy and contumely. When Vidyasagar was apprised of the misbehaviour of the refractory boys, he was greatly annoyed, and called for the names the ringleaders and instigators. But no one ventured to give names. No one admitted the offence. Vidyasagar was a great enemy of untruth. He knew that the boys were actually guilty, but he could not discover the leaders. He therefore, drove the whole

class away. The boys, in a body, complained against him to the higher authorities, who called on him for an explanation. He wrote in reply that in these small matters, the Principal ought to have the sole control, and that if, in such cases, the boys were permitted to bring complaints against the Principal, it would be very difficult to keep them in check. The authorities concurred with him, and returned to him all the papers connected with the case. The boys had been in great glee that they had complained against Vidyasagar, who in consequence would soon be taken to task. Some of them even ventured to declare openly, that he was sure to lose his appointment, and consequently would have to turn a petty chapman. But when they heard that the authorities had returned the case to him, they were, as if, struck by a thunderbolt. By and by, the guardians of the boys came to know of their wickedness, and upbraided them severely. The guardians then went to Vidyasagar, and requested him to forget and forgive. He instructed them to send their wards to Kali Charan Babu.

The boys had now no other alternative left, than to go to Kali Charan, whom they had so unreasonably insulted, and ask his forgiveness. Kali Charan took the boys with him to Vidyasagar, who now asked the ringleaders that were in front, who should turn a chapman, whether they or he? The boys hung down their heads in shame, and could not

utter a word. He then asked Kali Charan, if they had asked forgiveness of him. The latter replied, that he had at first declined to come with them, but at their earnest solicitation, after admission of their guilt, he had brought them to him (Vidyasagar), and that he could now do with them as he pleased. Vidyasagar then said to Kali Charan,—‘If you request me to forgive them, I will forgive them, otherwise not.’ Kali Charan was now put on the horns of a dilemma. After much reflection, he said,—‘They have committed a greater offence against you than against me. Please, do as you think fit. Do not throw it on my head.’ The boys fell to Vidyasagar’s feet, and with tearful eyes, craved his forgiveness, promising never to do so again. Vidyasagar now forgave them, and told them to go to school. Dear reader, do you see the beauty when strength of mind is combined with kind forgiveness?

It is not very difficult to forgive an offender, when he admits his guilt and repents of it, and it is almost a daily occurrence. But it is not so easy for a man of influence to ask forgiveness of his inferior, for the superior thinks it beneath his dignity to do so, and his pride is wounded. But one, who can do so, must be considered to be truly great. On one occasion, it so happened that Vidyasagar, relying on the misrepresentation of a man, whom he had believed to be a trustworthy person, did Pandit Tarakumar Kaviratna a piece of injustice.

But he subsequently found out that he had been circumvented by malicious reports. He at once called upon the injured person at the latter's residence, and with tearful eyes and pitiful tones, implored his forgiveness, saying,—‘Kaviratna, I have unjustly done you a great wrong. Please, tell me how can I redress it?’ What greatness of heart!

Vidyasagar was kind and affectionate, equally to his family, relations and friends. Babu Syama Charan Bisvas, one of the late Vice-Chairmen of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, was among Vidyasagar's particular friends. In Calcutta, his house stood in front of that of Vidyasagar; but his ancestral home was at village Paintel, in the Hugli district, some 19 or 20 miles off Calcutta. At the urgent request of his dear friend, Vidyasagar once visited Paintel. Many poor people of the locality came to him to beg for assistance, and he distributed his charities liberally. The people of that place, even to the present day, remember his name with grateful tears. After his return from Paintel, he had an attack of Fever, accompanied with polypus and bleeding of the nose, which necessitated the use of snuff for some time, but, in a short time, he gave it up. It is said, that he acquired the habit of smoking tobacco, when he was 31 or 32 years old, under the following circumstances.

Doctor Navin Chandra Mitra of Barasat, who lived in Jhamapukur, Calcutta, was in terms of

intimate friendship with Vidyasagar. His brother, Kali Krishna Mitra, was also familiar with him. Vidyasagar used now and then to visit Navin Babu. The doctor was a great smoker of tobacco. One day, as he was engaged in conversation with Vidyasagar, the page presented a hookah to smoke from. The host requested his visitor to smoke, but the latter declined. At last, at the earnest solicitations of his friend, he drew in a little smoke to oblige him. The next day, when he called again, he himself ordered the page to get tobacco ready. The boy presented the hookah, and he consumed the tobacco to ashes, without offering his friend to smoke out of it. He thus formed his habit of smoking tobacco. But he never disturbed his servants and maids in their sleep or when they were busy with some other work, either for tobacco or betel. Sometimes he prepared both, for his use, with his own hands. He used to have small bits of divided betel-nuts and other spices ready at hand, and he prepared and chewed betels at pleasure, without any body's assistance. He never threw away surplus bits of nuts or other spices, but put them into phials for future use. Though he was very liberal in charities, yet in his own house, he was most economical. His maxim was 'Waste not, want not.'

Babu Nilambar Mukharji, late minister of the Cashmere Raj, and present Vice-Chairman of the Calcutta Municipality, was one of the scholars of the Sanskrit College in Vidyasagar's time, and was

a great favourite with him. Vidyasagar's impression was, that he would become a great man, which was eventually fulfilled. Nilambar Babu had always a great reverence for Vidyasagar. Even when he rose to the highest post in Cashmere, he consulted him (Vidyasagar) on important State affairs. Before he threw up the high office, he had consulted the learned Pandit and obtained his permission. Since his appointment as Principal of the Sanskrit College, Vidyasagar had made provisions for monthly stated allowances for several poor, but respectable families. It is said, that he had settled upon Bhuvan Mohon Singha, son of Babu Jagad-durlabh Singha of Barabazar, who had, in former days, given shelter to Vidyasagar and his father, a monthly allowance of 30 rupees. After Bhuvan Mohan's death, his wife used to receive the stipend. His son-in-law was also one of Vidyasagar's favourites, and obtained from him pecuniary helps now and then. About this time, he settled upon Syama Charan Ghoshal, a relation of his, a monthly allowance of ten rupees. Besides these fixed stipends, he helped occasionally many poor, high-class people with gifts of money. We have no means of knowing all his charities ; because, to avoid exposure and humiliation of the recipients, he made the gifts most privately. In this respect, he followed Christ's precept,—‘Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth’.

Before Vidyasagar's time, Sanskrit Lilavati and

Vijaganita (Algebra) were used in the Sanskrit College, but he introduced, in their stead, European Mathematical works. Pandit Priya Nath Bhattacharyya was a professor of Mathematics at that time. He subsequently studied the civil law under Vidyasagar's instructions, and, at his instance, obtained the post of a Munsiff.

An association, called the "Bethune Society", had been formed in memory of the late J. E. D. Bethune, one of the greatest friends the country ever had, mainly through Vidyasagar's exertions. It was at a meeting of this Society that his essay on "Sanskrit Language and Belles-lettres" was read. It is said, that Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari read an English translation of the essay. However that might be, there can be no doubt, that it is a most learned dissertation. It was first published on the 18th April, 1856. The pamphlet contains 89 pages, demy 12 mo. Considering the weight and importance of the subject, it must be asserted, that the discussion has been very brief and limited. The author has admitted it himself. He says :—

'This essay was first read at a meeting of the Bethune Society. At the earnest request of many of my friends, I, under the permission of the President, published at that time 200 copies of the book, and distributed them gratis.

'According to general practice, such essays become the sole property of the association at which they are read. I, therefore, offered to the President

to purchase its copyright. But he kindly made it over to me gratuitously. Accordingly, I issue a reprint of the book.

‘I am well aware, that the compilation is not as perfect as it ought to be, considering the importance of the subject discussed. In fact, out of the vast number of Sanskrit Literary works, only the names of a few have been mentioned. But it must be borne in mind, that only one hour’s time is allowed by the Bethune Society for the reading of an essay. Consequently, keeping in view the shortness of the time allowed, the briefest method possible has been adopted.’

Vidyasagar had a great mind to discuss the subject at great length, and present it to the public, but, to the misfortune of Bengal, he could not carry out the project for want of time. The language of the short treatise, however, is very plain and elegant.

On the 9th December 1854, appeared his *Sakuntala*, a Bengali version of the Sanskrit “Abhijnan-Sakuntalam.” It is not written in a dramatic form, though the original is one of the best dramas in Sanskrit. Some portions of the original text has been translated literally ; while of others, the purport only has been taken. It is superfluous to say that, in excellence and beauty, it surpassed all its predecessors.

CHAPTER XVI.

RE-MARRIAGE OF HINDU WIDOWS.

We now come to that part of his life, where he had to bring all his talents, energies, perseverance, and activity into action to fight manfully and heroically with his own countrymen in a field of social reform, which caused so great an agitation throughout the length and breadth of the land, as not to be met with in the recent history of the country, and which made his name known to every native of the soil. The rules of the Hindu Society of modern times do not permit remarriage of the widows of their religious faith. The orthodox Hindu community follow the tenets of their *Sastras* as rigorously and faithfully, as they adhere closely to the customs of their country. In former days, Hindu widows, in general, followed their deceased husbands by concremating themselves in their funeral pyres, thus showing to the world the glory of Indian *Satis* (literally, 'Chaste women'), and those who lacked so much fortitude and courage, led, all the rest of their days, a rigidly ascetic life. But since the abolition of the practice of *Sati* by Lord William Bentinck in 1829, the Hindu widows have had no other alternative left, than to pass a purely ascetic life. Vidyasagar's naturally gentle and compassionate heart was moved at the sight of the tender-aged, young widows suffering rigorous hardships, and he was firmly resolved to devote his life

to the cause of the remarriage of Hindu widows, as in days past, Raja Ram Mohan Ray had sacrificed his life in his endeavours to prevent the practice of concrementation of *Satis*.

This resolution had sat deeprooted in his mind from his early years. It is said, that Vidyasagar had a girl-playmate at Birsingha. He was very fond of her. After he had been separated from her, and had come down to Calcutta for education, she was married at an early age, but, in a short time, her husband died, and she was a widow. When Vidyasagar next went home during one of his college-vacations, he was deeply sorry to hear that his dear playmate had been married and had lost her husband. He immediately called at her house to see her, and there learnt that she had not eaten anything that day, because it was the eleventh day of the moon (which is a day of fasting for Hindu widows). He felt so much commiseration for the little girl, that he, then and there, resolved that he would give his life to relieve the sufferings of widows. He was at that time only 13 or 14 years old.

It is also said, that when he was still a pupil in the Sanskrit College and was come home during another vacation, he came to learn that a young widow of a respectable family had formed an illicit connection with a young man, and as a fruit of that connection, she had been pregnant, that various means had been adopted to bring about

abortion, but those proving unsuccessful, she had given birth to a very nice child, and that, in order to avoid exposure and shame, the cruel mistress of the house had throttled the baby to death in the nursery. This sad tale touched the very core of his sympathetic heart, and he was resolutely determined to do something for Hindu widows.

Although Vidyasagar's soft heart melted at what appeared to him to be the most miserable distress of the widows, he did not think fit, and that rightly, to broach the subject in public, until he could alight upon *Sastric* proofs. It is said that, at this period of his life, he devoted all his thoughts on this subject. He passed his days and nights in the rooms of the Sanskrit College, studying all the ancient *Sastras* of the Hindus. We have already said in a previous chapter that, at this time, he hardly slept in the night, supping generally at Syama Charan Babu's house, which stood in front of the Sanskrit College building, and always breakfasting at his friend, Raj Krishna Babu's. After infinite toil and pains, one night, he suddenly bounced up in ecstasy and cried out loudly :—"I have, at last, found it." The cause of his so excessive delight was a passage of the "*Parasar-Sanhita*," which is given below for the edification of the readers :—

“নষ্টে মৃত্যে প্রব্রজিতে ক্লীবৈচ পতিতে পতৌ ।

পঞ্চাশৎস্ব নারীগণং পতিরন্তো বিধীয়তে ॥

মৃত্তে ভৰ্ত্তরি যা নারী ব্রহ্মচৰ্য্যে ব্যবস্থিতা ।

সা মৃত্তা লভতে স্বৰ্গং যথাতে ব্রহ্মচারিণঃ ॥

তিস্রঃ কোট্যেককোটী চ যানি লোমানি মানবে ।

তাবৎ কালং বসেৎ স্বৰ্গং ভৰ্ত্তারং যানুগচ্ছতি ॥”

পরশরসংহিতা ।

He gave the following interpretation to this passage :—

“On receiving no tidings of a husband, on his demise, on his turning an ascetic, on his being found impotent, or on his degradation,—under any one of these calamities, it is canonical for women, to take another husband. That woman who on the decease of her husband, observes the Brahmacharyya (leads the life of austerities and privations), attains heaven after death. She who burns herself with her deceased husband, resides in heaven for as many Kalas or thousands of years as there are hairs on the human body or thirty-five millions.”

He then commented on the above as follows :—

“Thus it appears that Parasar prescribes three rules for a widow ; marriage, the observance of the Brahmacharyya, and burning with the deceased husband. Among these, the custom of con cremation has been abolished by order of the ruling authorities ; only two ways, therefore, have now been left for the widows ; they have the option of marrying or observing the Brahmacharyya. But in the Kali

Yuga, it has become extremely difficult for widows to pass their lives in the observance of the Brahmacharyya ; and it is for this reason, that the philanthropic Parasar has, in the first instance, prescribed marriage. Be that as it may, what I wish to be clearly understood is—that as Parasar plainly prescribe marriage as one of the duties of women in the *Kali Yuga* under any one of the five above enumerated calamities, the marriage of widows in the *Kali Yuga* is consonant to the Sastras.”

We are quite ignorant of the *Sastras*, and we are, therefore, not in a position, to deal with the merits of the case in the true Sastric point of view. So we will confine ourselves to treat of it on general principles, and only give the reasonings and arguments as offered by both parties, without pretending to say which interpretation is right, or which is wrong.

When he thus alighted upon the *Sloka*, he took it to be the best, unrefutable argument in favour of the remarriage of Hindu widows, and he at once sat down to indite its interpretation. He passed the whole night in this composition, which he afterwards got into print and distributed amongst all classes of people. It is said, that before publishing the pamphlet, he had obtained his parents' permission. One day, he appeared before his father with the manuscript, and said ;—‘Father, I have written this book in favour of remarriage of Hindu widows, and have quoted passages from the

Sastras in support of my contention. Unless you hear it and approve of it, I cannot publish it.' The father answered,—'What will you do, if I do not approve of it?' Vidyasagar said,—'In that case, I won't publish it so long as you are in this world. After your demise, I will do with it, as seems to me best.' The father replied,—'Very good, then, to-morrow I shall hear it through, and then let you know my opinion.' On the next day, Vidyasagar read out the whole composition to his father. Thakurdas, at last, said to his son,—'Do you believe that what you have written, is all in accordance with the *Sastras*?' The son replied,—'O yes, there is no doubt of that.' The father said,—'You may then try your best, I have no objection to it.' After this, Vidyasagar went to his mother, and said,—'Mother, surely you can have no knowledge of the *Sastras*. I have written this book on 'Widow Marriage', but I cannot get it into print, without your permission. According to the *Sastras*, widow-marriage is canonical.' The mother replied,—'I have no objection to it. The widows are, as it were, a pest of the country, passing all their days in misfortune and affliction. You are going to relieve them of their miseries, and make them happy. I acquiesce to it with all my heart. But mind, take care not to tell *him*' (meaning her husband, Vidyasagar's father), 'because he might raise objections.' The son said,—'Oh ! don't fear for that ; father has already given his permission.'

The mother was highly delighted, and said—‘Very good, then, you have my permission. Now, do as you think best.’

Having thus armed himself with the weapons of his parents’ permission and blessing, Vidyasagar entered the arena. First of all, he published his paper on the validity of the remarriage of Hindu widows. The publication of this pamphlet excited a great sensation throughout the city. The orthodox Hindu community suddenly awoke from their slumber and rose into action. Protests were raised from all sides against this innovation. Vidyasagar now toiled hard and fast to carry his point. He was firm and sincere in his conviction. He had to pass whole nights in the interpretation of a single *Bhoka* that he discovered in the *Sastras* to his mind. He then issued another pamphlet of 22 pages in Bengali with the title, ‘Whether widows ought to be married or not.’ In this pamphlet, he displayed great abilities at composition. In one week, the first edition was out of print. The language of the book and the neat, proper arrangement of his arguments elicited general applause.

After this, he ~~went~~, one day, to the Sobhabazar *Raj-bati* to try if he could secure the co-operation of Raja Radha Kanta Dev in the furtherance of the cause he had advocated. In fact, the Raja had great influence with the Hindu Society. He was also in favour with the Govern-

ment. He had some reputation in that quarter. Vidyasagar, therefore, sought for his help. He, at first, consulted his friend, Ananda Krishna Babu (who was a grandson of the Raja, as we have already said). But Ananda Krishna dared not broach such a weighty subject on social reform before his august grandfather. He advised his friend to send the pamphlet to the Raja with a covering letter. Vidyasagar did as he was desired. It is said, that the perusal of the pamphlet gave the Raja great pleasure. He sent for Vidyasagar, and said to him that the method pursued in the compilation of the pamphlet was good, but that he himself was a man of worldly affairs, and he had, therefore, neither the ability nor the right to enter into a discussion of this subject. He also said that if Vidyasagar so wished, he could fix a day, and convene a meeting of the learned pundits to discuss the matter over. Vidyasagar assented, and a day was fixed for the debate. On the appointed day, a great number of pundits (including Vidyasagar) assembled, and a hot discussion ensued, but no decision was arrived at. Vidyasagar's method of discussion gave great satisfaction to the Raja, who rewarded him with a pair of *Shawl*.

The news of this prize soon spread over the city, and the leaders of the orthodox Hindu community were afraid that Raja Radha Kanta Dev was in favour of remarriage of Hindu widows.

They, therefore, went in a band to the Raja, and asked him, whether he wanted to introduce widow marriage into the Hindu society, as otherwise why should he go to reward Vidyasagar. The Raja replied, that he was not in favour of widow remarriage and that he was a man of the world and knew nothing of the *Sastras*, but that he had given Vidyasagar a prize for his unrivalled powers of reasoning. He also said that if they so desired, he would fix another day for the discussion of the matter.

On the second appointed day, a large number of vastly erudite and famous pundits assembled at the meeting. Among others, there was present Pandit Braja Nath Vidyaratna of Navadvip, the greatest scholar in *Smriti* (Hindu Law) of the time. As on the previous day, there was a very hot discussion, but no final decision. This day, the Raja gave a pair of *Shawl* as prize to Pandit Braja Nath Vidyaratna. Vidyasagar now plainly saw, that he had no hopes from that quarter, where had so much expected. But he was neither daunted, nor dejected. He was a man of resolute firmness and self-reliance. He never for a moment lost sight of his game. It was a conspicuous trait of his character, that the more he met with discouragements and obstacles in his way, the more they served to nerve him to action, to put forth all his energies and abilities to carry his point. He now applied himself more earnestly and assiduously to the

achievement of his aim. It is said, however, that after the frustration of his hopes of being aided by Raja Radha Kanta Dev, he did not visit his house, as formerly, for which the Raja was sincerely sorry, for he had a very high opinion of Vidyasagar and loved him dearly.

Immediately after the publication of Vidyasagar's first paper on widow marriage, many contradictory pamphlets were issued from different associations of Pandits and other influential bodies of the orthodox class. Many individual persons also issued papers of protest against the innovation. Among these, the name of Gangadhar *Kaviraj* of Murshidabad, the best Naidya native physician of the time, stands foremost. Protests were also issued from such associations, as the "Jessore Hindu-Dharma-Rakshini-Sabha" and the "Calcutta Dharma Sabha." At the fourth anniversary of the Jessore Sabha, many vastly erudite pundits from different parts of the country congregated, and lectured on the uncanonicalness of widow-marriage. In the meantime, appeared two pamphlets, 'Braja-Bilas' and "Ratna Pariksha," defending Vidyasagar's contention.

They did not bear the real names of their authors, who had assumed the pseudonyms of *Bhaipo* and *Bhaipo-Sahachar* (i. e. nephew and nephew-associate) respectively. But there was a general rumour that Vidyasagar himself was the author of both the papers. The first was an at-

tack on Braja Nath Vidyaratna, and the second, on Madhu Sudan Smritiratna. The language of both the pamphlets is so vile and scurrilous, that considering Vidyasagar's character and the gravity of his ordinary style of composition, it can hardly be believed to have emanated from the pen of that able writer, and that he could ever have indulged in such vulgar witticism and ribaldry. To satisfy the curiosity of the reader, we quote below a paragraph from the "Ratna-Pariksha": -

“তিনি, নিতান্ত ম্লান বদনে কহিলেন, দেখুন, আমি, ব্রজবিলাস লিখিয়া বিদ্যারত্ন খুড়র মানবলীলাসংবরণের কারণ হইয়াছি। মদীর বিষময়ী লেখনীর আঘাতেই, তদীয় জীবনযাত্রার সমাপন হইয়াছে, সে বিষয়ের অণুমাত্র সংশয় নাই। আনাদের সমাজে, গোহত্যা ও ব্রহ্মহত্যা অতি উৎকট পাপ বলিয়া পরিগণিত হইয়া থাকে। দুর্ভাগ্যক্রমে, ব্রজবিলাস লিখিয়া, কোন্ পাপে লিপ্ত হইয়াছি, বলিতে পারি না। এ অবস্থায়, আর আমার মধুবিলাস লিখিতে সাহস ও প্রবৃত্তি হইতেছে না; মধুবিলাস লিখিলে, হয়ত, আমার পুনরায় ঐরূপ পাপে লিপ্ত হইতে হইবেক। বিশেষতঃ, স্মৃতিরত্নখুড়ী বুড়ী নহেন; তাঁহাকে, ইদানীন্তন প্রচলিত প্রণালী অনুসারে, দীর্ঘ কাল, ব্রহ্মচর্যপালন করিতে হইবেক, সেটীও নিতান্ত সহজ ভাবনা নহে। যদি বল, আমরা উদ্যোগী হইয়া পুনঃসংস্কার সম্পন্ন করিব; সে প্রত্যাশাও সুদূরপরাহত। এই সমস্ত কারণবশতঃ, আর আমার, কোনও মতে, এ বিষয়ে হস্তক্ষেপ করিতে সাহস হইতেছে না।”

After the lecturing at the anniversary of the "Jessore Hindu Dharma Rakshini-Sabha", appeared *Vinaya-Patrika*, a paper of protest against

the lectures. It was also anonymous, but the rumour was that Vidyasagar was its author. It was also an attack against such Pandits as Braja Nath and Bhuvan Mohan Vidyaratnas of Navadvip. Its language is as scurrilous as that of the two former pamphlets, and it is hardly possible that Vidyasagar could have been its author.

The Hindu Society was at this time, as at present, divided into three sections. The first section was the orthodox community, guided by the *Sastric* pundits, who were declared opponents of the remarriage of Hindu widows. The second was the English-educated old class, who, in their hearts, were in favour of the innovation, but had not the courage to advocate its cause openly. The third section was the English-educated young community, who were inspired with European ideas, manners, and civilisation. The last named section were real advocates of widow-marriage, but their number was infinitesimal in comparison with the orthodox community, and they had not sufficient influence to be able to induce the other sections to their side. As a matter of consequence, Vidyasagar's movement found no favour with the general Hindus, though he succeeded in persuading the rulers of the soil to pass a Law on the subject, of which hereafter.

It must be said here, in passing, that Vidyasagar's exertion to introduce re-marriage of wi-

dows into Hindu Society was not the first move in the direction. It is said, that more than a century ago, Raja Raj Ballabh of Vikrampur, Dacca, then a powerful prince, tried to bring this innovation into Hindu Society. He had, in his house, a young widowed daughter, and he was determined to give her in marriage. He had secured favourable opinions of Pandits from different parts of the country, and, at last, asked for the opinions of the Pandits of Nuddea, who gave quite contrary opinions. Raja Raj Ballabh had, therefore, to give up his project. Some 19 or 20 years before Vidyasagar's agitation, a Mahratta Brahman of Nagpore in the Central Provinces of India, started a movement on the subject, but without success. About the same time, a Madrasee Brahman made attempts to get a Law passed on the subject, but failed. Some time after this, Babu Mati Lal Sil, one of the greatest millionaires of Calcutta, made strenuous exertions in this direction. It is said, that he even promised a present of ten thousand rupees to the first man who would lawfully marry a widow, and was prepared to spend his last pice in the furtherance of this cause, but met with no better success. Some two years before the publication of Vidyasagar's pamphlet, one Syama Charan Das, a wealthy man of the iron-smith caste, tried to give his widowed daughter in marriage. For this purpose, he had secured favourable opinions of a number of Pandits. But

most of these Pandits subsequently altered their mind, and stood against widow-marriage. Syama Charan Das was completely baffled in his attempts. Some say that contemporaneously with Vidyasagar, the Chief of Kota in Rajputana tried to introduce widow-marriage into his State, but was equally unsuccessful. The well-known Bengali writer, Babu Bihari Lal Sarkar, in his biography of Vidyasagar, says,—‘The Hindus of the orthodox class are staunch believers in fatalism. They firmly believe in regeneration. They also believe that the happiness or affliction of the human race is the fruit of their own piety or otherwise of their pre-birth. They, therefore, hold to the tenets of their *Sastras* and the customs of their country so tenaciously, that it is never an easy matter to induce them to take to an innovation.’

After the appearance of the numerous protest papers against the re-marriage of Hindu widows, Vidyasagar published in October, 1855, his second pamphlet titled “Whether widows ought to be married or not.” In this paper, attempts were made to refute the arguments of the antiparty. Its language is serious, elegant, easy and plain. It testifies to his vast erudition and faculties of research. But most of the illustrious Pandits of the different parts of Bengal, and even of Benares, protested against it.

It is needless to enter into a detailed discus-

sion of the merits of these protests. Suffice it to say, that they gave quite different interpretations to the very passages quoted by Vidyasagar himself, besides new quotations from different *Dharma Sastras* to refute his arguments. The very passage* from the Parasara-Sanhita, which formed the basis of Vidyasagar's arguments, was interpreted very differently. Their interpretation was,— ‘When the future husband of a *betrothed girl* cannot be traced, or is dead, or retires from worldly affairs and turns an ascetic, or is found to be impotent, or is degraded,—under any of these five conditions—the *betrothed girl* may take a second husband.’ Even recently, Pandit Panchanan Tarkaratna of Bhatpara, in his edition of the ‘Parasara-Sanhita’ published from the Bangabasi office, has interpreted the passage in the above sense. Besides, he says, that, even assuming for argument's sake, that Vidyasagar's interpretation was correct, the remarriage of widows has been prohibited by other *Dharma Sastras*. To prove his contention, he quotes the following passage from “Aditya-Purana.”

‘দীর্ঘকালং ব্রহ্মচর্যং ————— ।

দেবরেশ স্ত্রোতঃপতির্দত্তা কন্যা প্রদীয়তে ॥

কন্যানামসবর্ণানাং বিবাহশ্চ দ্বিজাতিভিঃ ।

দত্তৌরসেতরেষাস্ত পুত্রাশ্চৈন পরিগ্রহঃ ॥

* নষ্টে মৃতে প্রব্রজিতে ক্লীবচে পতিতে পতৌ ।

পঞ্চ আপৎসু নারীণাং পতিরভ্যাবিধীয়তে ॥

শূদ্রেষু দাসগোপালকুল মিত্রাঙ্কসীরিণাম্ ।

ভোজ্যান্নতা গৃহস্থসা—

এতানি লোকগুণ্যং কলেৱাদৌ মহাঋতিঃ ।

নিবর্তিতানি কৰ্ম্মাণি ব্যবস্থাপূৰ্ব্বকঃ বুধৈঃ ॥

He interprets the passage as follows :—‘ Wise pundits, after the commencement of the Kali Yuga, have carefully interdicted, for protection of Society, the under-mentioned acts,—*viz.*, Brahmacharyya for a long period, the procreation of a son by husband’s younger brother, *re-marriage of a married woman*, marriage of the Dvija (twice-born) with girls of different castes, acceptance of a child as one’s son save one’s own begotten son or a lawfully adopted son, eating of rice touched or prepared by a menial servant, Gopala, Kulamitra, or Arddhasiri, of the Sudra class.’

Besides these *Sastric* discussions, the public, ignorant of the *Sastras*, both educated and uneducated, joined in these controversies. Most of these people were against the innovation. The rich, the poor ; the old, the young ; all discussed the matter. The vernacular periodicals of the time filled their columns with controversies on the subject, only a few of them being in favour of, but most of them against, the innovation. The “Tattva-Bodhini,” one of the best magazines of the day, published Vidyasagar’s first paper in full. The poets and bards of the day composed and published various poems and songs. These songs

were sung everywhere, and people heard them with great gusto.

Isvar Chandra Gupta, one of the most illustrious poets of the time, who was also one of the friends of Vidyasagar, wrote the following verses :

“বাধিয়াছে দলাদলি, লাগিয়াছে গোল ।
 বিধবার বিয়ে হবে, বাজিয়াছে ঢোল ॥
 কত বাদী, প্রতিবাদী, করে কত রব ।
 ছেলে বুড়ী আদি করি, মাতিয়াছে সব ॥
 কেহ উঠে শাপাপরে, কেহ থাকে মূলে ।
 করিছে প্রমাণ জড়ো, পাঁজি পুঁথি খুলে ॥
 এক দলে যত বুড়ো, আর দলে ছোঁড়া ।
 গোঁড়া হয়ে মাতে সব, দেখেনাকো গোড়া ॥
 লাফালাফি, দাপাদাপি, করিতেছে যত ।
 ছুই দলে খাপা-খাপি, ছাপাছাপি কত ॥
 বচন রচন করি, কত কথা বলে ।
 ধর্মের বিচার পথে, কেহ নাহি চলে ॥
 “পরশর” প্রমাণেতে বিধি বলে কেউ ।
 কেহ বলে এষে দেখি, সাগরের ঢেউ ॥
 কোথা বা করিছে লোক, শুধু হেউ হেউ ।
 কোথা বা বাঘের পিছে, লাগিয়াছে ফেউ ॥
 অনেকেই এই মত, লতেছে বিধান ।
 অকৃত ঘোনির বটে, বিবাহ-বিধান-॥
 কেহ বলে কতাকত, কেবা আর বাছে ?
 একেবারে তরে বাক, যত রাঁড়ী আছে ॥

কেহ কহে এই বিধি, কেমনে হইবে ?
 হিঁদ্র স্বরের রাঁড়ী, সিঁদ্র পরিবে ।
 বুকে ছেলে, কঁাকে ছেলে, ছেলে ঝোল কোলে ।
 তার বিয়ে বিধি নয় উলু উলু বোলে ॥
 গিলে গিলে ভাত খায়, দাঁত নাই মুখে ।
 হইয়াছে আঁত খালি, হাত চাপা বুকে ॥
 ঘাটে যারে নিয়ে যাব, চড়াইয়া খাটে ।
 শাড়ী-পর্য্য, চুড়ি হাতে, তারে নাকি খাটে ?
 স্ত্রিয়া বিয়ের নাম, “কোনে” সেজে বুড়ী ।
 কেমনে বলিবে মুখে, “থুড়ি থুড়ি থুড়ি” ?
 পোড়া-মুখ পোড়াইয়া কেন পোড়ী-মুখী ।
 ‘হুখী’ ‘সুখী’ মেরে কেলে কেঁচে হবে খুকি ?
 ব্যাটা আছে যার তরে, বেলগাছ এঁচে,
 তুড়ি মেরে থুড়ি বলে, সে বসিবে কেঁচে ॥
 গমনের আয়োজন, শমনের স্বরে ।
 বিবাহের সাধ সেকি, মনে আর করে ?
 যেখানে সেখানে গুনি, এই কলরব ।
 বালার বিবাহ দিতে রাজি আছে সব ॥
 সকলেই এইরূপ, বলাবলি করে ।
 ছুঁড়ির কল্যাণে ঘেন, বুড়ি নাহি তরে ॥
 শরীর পড়েছে ঝুলি, চুল ঝুলি পাখা ।
 কে ধরাবে মাছ তারে, কে পরাবে লাঁথা ?
 জ্ঞানহারা হয়ে যাই, নাহি পাই ধ্যানে ।
 কে পাড়িবে ‘সৎবাণ’, মায়ের কল্যাণে ?

Dasarathi Ray, one of the greatest bards that Bengal ever produced, composed and sang many poesies and songs, out of which one of each denomination is given below :—

“বিধবার বিবাহ কথ্য, কলির প্রধান স্থান কলিকাতা,
নগরে উঠেছে অতি রব ।

কাটাকাটি হচ্ছে বাণ, ক্রমে দেখছি বলবান,
হবার কথা হয়ে উঠেছে সব ॥

স্কীরপাই নগরে ধাম, ধল গণ্য গুণধাম,
জৈশ্বর বিদ্যাসাগর নামক ।

তিনি কর্তা বাঙ্গালির, তাতে আবার কোম্পানির,
হিন্দু কালেক্টর অধ্যাপক ।

বিবাহ দিতে স্বরায়, হাকিমের হয়েছেন রায়,
আগে কেউ টের পায় নাই সেটা ।

তার কলে অর্ডর, যেতে করে অর্ডর,
চটীকে বুদ্ধি আটিকে রাখবে কেটা ॥

হাকিমের এই বুদ্ধি, ধর্ম বুদ্ধি প্রজা বুদ্ধি,
এ বিবাহ সিদ্ধি হলে পরে ।

বিধবা করে গর্ভপাত, অমঙ্গল উৎপাত,
তাতে রাজার রাজ্যে হতে পারে ॥

হিন্দু ধর্ম্মে যারা রত, প্রমাণ দিয়ে নানা মত,
হবে না বলে করিতেছেন উক্ত ।

ইহাদের যে উত্তর, টিকিবে নাকো উত্তর,
উত্তীর্ণ হওয়া অতি শক্ত ॥

গীত ।

তোমরা ঈশ্বরের দোষ ঘটাবে কি রূপে ।

রাখিতে ঈশ্বরের মত, . হইয়ে ঈশ্বর দূত,

এসেছেন ঈশ্বর বিদ্যাসাগর রূপে ॥

রাজ-আজ্ঞার দূতে আসি কাটে মুণ্ড দিয়ে অসি,

রসি বেঞ্চে ফেলে অন্ধরূপে ।

তা বলে দূতে কখন দুষী হয় না সেই পাপে ।

কি আর ভাব সকলেতে, হবে যেতে জেতে হতে,

জেতের অভিমান সাগরে দাও সঁপে ।

এক কৰ্ম্ম প্রায় জগত, ভারত আদিপুরাণ বত,

ভারতে চলিবে না কোন রূপে ।

বখন করেছে এ ভারত

অধিকার ইংরেজ ভূপে ॥

Even cultivators, street-porters, cab-men, and other lower class people indulged in these songs. Some of these lays appeared on the borders of native cloths. The following song made its appearance in some of the Santipore cloths : —

“সুখে থাকুক বিদ্যাসাগর চিরজীবী হ’য়ে ।

সদরে করেছে রিপোর্ট বিধবাদের কবে বিয়ে ॥

কবে হবে শুভদিন, প্রকাশিবে এ আইন,

দেশে দেশে জেলায় জেলায় বেরবে হুকুম—

বিধবা রমণীর বিয়ের লেগে যাবে ধুম,

মনের সুখে থাক্বো মোরা মনোমত পতি লয়ে ।

এমন দিন কবে হবে, বৈধবা-যন্ত্রণা যাবে,

আভরণ পরিব সবে, লোকে দেখবে তাই—

আলোচাল কাঁচকলার মুখে দিয়ে ছাই,—

এরো হ'রে যাব সবে বরণডালা মাথায় লয়ে ॥”

But Vidyasagar did not care for these taunts and ridicules. He was a man of extraordinary strength of mind and fixedness of purpose. He was resolutely determined to carry his point at all risks and hazards.

The *Bangadarsan*, one of the best conducted Bengali monthlies, edited by Rai Bankim Chandra Chatarji Bahadur, in its issue for June 1880, published a most reasonable article against re-marriage of widows. The purport of a paragraph of that article is given below :—

Some say that the widows of Bengal lead all their days a most miserable life, that they feel happiness in nothing, that all amusements are prohibited to them, and that consequently they are always most intolerably grieved at their heart. They also say that it is a great cruelty to keep them in this miserable state all their life, and that those only, who are devoid of kindness and tender affection, and whose hearts are not melted at other people's distress, can act so cruelly. But we do not think that the hardships of the widows are intolerable. Supposing they are really intolerable, but, at the same time, highly beneficial to society, what necessity is there for removing them? Those hearts that weep for an infinitesimal number of

persons, ought to break down for the thousands of persons of the society. How can he, that cannot bear to see the piercing of a needle into the body of a single individual, suffer himself to see the sacrifice of hundreds of individuals. If it is a cruelty not to relieve the miseries of a handful of widows, then it must be a barbarous inhumanity to cause mischief to thousands of individuals of the society by inaugurating widow-marriage; it would be no piety to make a gift of a pair of shoes after killing a cow. If there are apprehensions of widows turning immoral, those apprehensions cannot be wholly eradicated by giving them away in marriage, for many married women are as well seen to lose their character. We are of gentle temperament, and have therefore learned to be kind only; we cannot bear to see the severe form of justice. As a matter of consequence, we cannot keep justice in view; we keep in view our emotions only, and express our opinions accordingly. This is exactly what Spencer calls "Emotional bias."

After the publication of his second paper, Vidyasagar no more entered into controversies with his opponents. He now published an English translation of the two papers with the title, "Marriage of Hindu Widows." In this work he was greatly assisted by his friends, Ananda Krishna and Srinath. Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari corrected the proof-sheets. It is said that Vidyasagar gave a copy of this English pamphlet to the British Indian Association for forwarding

it to the Government with its recommendation, for he was then intent on having a legislation passed on the subject. For this purpose, he consulted many of the higher officials of Government, who were his friends. There were many obstacles in its way, and the English pamphlet helped to remove those obstacles and clear the way, because it served to convince the European officials that the Hindu widows were really leading miserable lives and that a legislation was necessary to mitigate their sufferings. It was under the instruction of these officials, that Vidyasagar submitted, on the 4th October, 1855, to the Government of India, a petition praying for a law on the subject. The petition was subscribed by himself and one thousand persons besides. It ran as follows :—

“ To

“ THE HONOURABLE
“ THE LEGISLATIVE
“ COUNCIL OF INDIA.

“ The humble petition of the
“ undersigned Hindoo inhabitants
“ of the Province of Bengal,

“ RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH,

“ 1. That by long established custom the marriage of widows among Hindoos is prohibited.

“ 2. That in the opinion and firm belief of your petitioners, this custom cruel and unnatural in itself, is highly prejudicial to the interests of morality, and is otherwise fraught with the most mischievous consequences to society.

“ 3. That the evil of this custom is greatly aggravated

by the practice among Hindoos of marrying their sons and daughters at an early age, and in many cases in their very infancy, so that female children not unfrequently become widows before they can speak or walk.

"4. That in the opinion and firm belief of your petitioners, this custom is not in accordance with the Shasters, or with a true interpretation of Hindoo Law.

"5. That your petitioners and many other Hindoos, have no objection of conscience to the marriage of widows, and are prepared to disregard all objections to such marriages, founded on social habit or on any scruple resulting from an erroneous interpretations of religion.

"6. That your petitioners are advised that by the Hindoo Law, as at present administered and interpreted in the Courts of Her Majesty and the East India Company, such marriages are illegal, and the issue thereof would be deemed illegitimate.

"7. That Hindoos, who entertain no objections of conscience to such marriages, and who are prepared to contract them notwithstanding social and religious prejudices are by the aforesaid interpretation of Hindoo Law prevented therefrom.

"8. That, in the humble opinion of your petitioners, it is the duty of the Legislature to remove all legal obstacles to the escape from a social evil of such magnitude which, though sanctioned by custom, is felt by many Hindoos to be a most injurious grievance, and to be contrary to a true interpretation of Hindoo Law.

"9. That the removal of the legal obstacles to the marriage of widows, would be in accordance with the wishes and feelings of a considerable section of pious and orthodox Hindoos, and would in no wise affect the interests, though it might shock the prejudices, of those who conscientiously believe that the prohibition of the marriage of

widows is sanctioned by the Shasters, or who uphold it on fancied grounds of social advantage.

"10. That such marriages are neither contrary to nature nor prohibited by law or custom in any other country or by any other people in the world.

"11. That your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that your Honourable Council will take into early consideration the propriety of passing a law (as annexed) to remove all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindoo widows, and to declare the issue of all such marriages to be legitimate.

"And your petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

"AN ACT

*"To declare the lawfulness of the marriage of
Hindoo Widows.*

"WHEREAS the marriage of Hindoo widows is by long-established custom and received opinion prohibited, and whereas this prohibition is not only a grievous hardship upon those whom it immediately affects, but also tends generally to depravation of morals, and the injury of society; and whereas it is believed by many Hindoos that this prohibition is not in accordance with a true interpretation of the Shasters; and whereas it is expedient to declare the lawfulness of such marriages, and to make provision for the consequence of the second marriage of a Hindoo widow as regards her rights in her first husband's estate. It is hereby declared and enacted as follows:—

"I. No marriage contracted between Hindoos, shall be deemed invalid, or the issue thereof illegitimate, by reason of the woman having been previously married or betrothed to another person since deceased, any custom or interpretation of Hindoo Law to the contrary notwithstanding.

"II. All rights and interests which any widow may by law have in her deceased husband's estate, either by way of maintenance or by inheritance shall, upon her second mar-

riage, cease and determine as if she had then died, and the next heirs of such deceased husband then living, shall thereupon succeed to such estate. Provided that nothing in this Section shall affect the rights and interests of any widow in any estate or other property to which she may have succeeded, or become entitled under the will of her late husband or in any estate or other property which she may have inherited from her own relations, or in any *Stridhar* or other property acquired by her, either during the lifetime of her late husband, or after his death."

On the 17th November, 1855, a draft Bill of "An Act to remove all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu Widows" was introduced into the Legislative Council to the Government of India by J. P. Grant, one of the members of the Council. In introducing the Bill, the Mover (Grant), among other things, said :—"It is said that this custom (restriction of Hindu widow marriage), cruel and unnatural in itself, is highly injurious to the morals, and is otherwise most mischievous to society. From these premises, it argues that a law having such effects ought not to be forced upon any one who disapproves of it ; and it prays that, as the petitioners are of opinion that the custom is not in accordance with a true interpretation of the Hindu Sastras, they and those who agree with them may be relieved from the legal restriction of which they complain.' He went on to say,—'The custom of the country is universally against the marriage of Hindu widows amongst the higher castes, and all modern English text-books affirm

that the law is as the petitioners allege. Indeed, text-writers speak on this point with less qualification perhaps than they might have done, if they had given more attention to it. But the custom prohibiting remarriage is followed so universally in practice, that the point does not appear to have been very deeply studied by any of the English writers on Hindu Law.

In another part of his speech, Grant said,—‘ I will read to the Council a paper which was partly supplied to me by a Hindu gentleman of great knowledge, and partly taken down from that gentleman’s mouth, which describes the mode of life which a Hindu widow of respectability is now actually required to adopt, until the latest day of her life.

“ A widow is required to live a life of austerity, the only alternative being to ascend the funeral pile of her husband. Her manner of life is minutely prescribed. Not only must she see no man, she must also avoid every approach to ease, luxury, or pleasure : she must wear no ornaments : her hair must be shaved, or at least must be worn dishevelled : she must not see her face in a mirror, nor use perfumes or flowers : she must not freely anoint her body ; and her dress must be plain, coarse and dirty. The use of any kind of conveyance is prohibited, and she must not rest on a bed. Her food is limited as to quantity as well as to quality. She must not take more than a single

coarse meal a day, and the betel-leaf, which terminates every repast in India, and is often substituted for a meal, is denied her. Besides other fasts, perhaps a dozen in the year, the Hindu widow is required to abstain absolutely from food and drink twice a month one day and night, during every bright and dark period of the moon, on the 25th and 26th day of her age, from which not even severe sickness can give her a dispensation."

Farther on, he said—"I now come to the immorality which the petition states the prohibition engenders. I do not wish to dwell on this point longer than is absolutely necessary; for it is one which can be agreeable to nobody, and must be peculiarly distasteful to those for whose benefit this Bill is intended. But it is impossible to shirk the point altogether; for, in truth, it is the strongest argument in favour of the Bill. The Hindu practice of Brahmacharyya is an attempt to struggle against Nature, and like all other attempts to struggle against Nature, is entirely unsuccessful. Every candid Hindu will admit that, in the majority of cases, young Hindu widows fall into vice; that in comparatively few cases are these severe rules for a life of mortification virtuously observed; that in many cases, a licentious and profligate life is entered upon in secret; and that in many other cases the wretched widows are impelled to desert their homes and to live a life that brings open disgrace upon their families. I will read to the Council a

very short passage on this subject from Ward's description of the manners and customs of the Hindus :-

"Early marriages also give rise to another dreadful evil, almost all these girls, after marriage, remain at home one, two, or three years ; and during this time, numbers are left widows without having enjoyed the company of their husbands a single day. These young widows being forbidden to marry, almost without exception, become prostitutes."

In support of this contention, he again cited a passage from a paper published by Major Wilkinson, some time resident of Nagpore. The passage runs as follows :—

"To revert to our author (a Brahman of Nagpore), he maintains that the present prohibition against the second marriages of widows, especially these infant widows, is highly impolitic and unwise, because, in the first place, it disappoints the palpable purpose of the Creator in having sent them into the world ; secondly, because it inevitably leads to great moral depravity and vice on the part of these widows ; thirdly, because it inevitably causes a frightful amount of infanticides and abortions ; fourthly, because the maintenance of these widows in an honourable and virtuous course of life causes a ceaseless, though fruitless anxiety to their parents, and parents-in-law, &c. ; fifthly, because these widows, inevitably rendered corrupt and

vicious themselves by the hard and unnatural laws operating on them cannot be prevented from corrupting and destroying the honour and virtue of all other females with whom they associate.”’

Grant again said,—‘That these cases are proved instances of frightful murders, incests, and, in short, of every abomination which it is possible to conceive, caused by the prohibition of the remarriage of widows.’ A little farther on, he said,—‘Between three and four hundred years ago, Raghunandana, a very learned and celebrated Pandit, who had written a digest of the Hindu Law, which formed in Bengal a text-book to this day, made a resolute attempt of this kind. He had, at one time, firmly resolved that his own widowed daughter should remarry ; but the attempt failed.’

A little farther on, he read a paragraph from a letter issued by himself, some time before, when he was Secretary to the Law Commission, dated the 4th July, 1837, which the Commissioners had caused to be written, on a proposition (to which they objected), that for the prevention of infanticide, the concealment of pregnancy should be made a specific offence :—

“The Law Commissioners observe with deep regret that the Western Sadar Court believe child murder to be a prevalent crime in the provinces under their jurisdiction. The Law Commissioners think that much of this crime may be owing to the cruel law which prevents Hindu widows from con-

tracting a second legal marriage. The Law Commissioners are sensible that a mere alteration in the law will immediately and directly effect little towards remedying the evil. But they are not without expectation that an alteration of the law would induce an alteration of feeling in this matter, and, if that could be effected, more would be done towards repressing child murder than could be done by the most severe laws. They are now collecting information on this point, the result of which will duly be laid before the Government of India."

Grant also said,—' At the same time, the Commissioners addressed a Circular calling for information on the subject, and for the opinions of the Sadar Courts at all the four Presidencies. The returns to that Circular were entirely unfavourable to the views of the Law Commission. * * the objections of the Sadar Courts resolved themselves into these:—First, that an Act to remove legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows would be an interference with Hindus in the matter of their own law and religion ; secondly, that it would entirely dislocate the frame of the Hindu Law of Inheritance ; and thirdly, (an objection which came from the Sadar Court at Madras) that it would be entirely a dead letter.'

In the concluding portion of his introductory speech, Grant said,—' The Law prohibiting Sati was a compulsory law. From the day it was

passed, every Hindu, whatever his own feelings on the subject might be, was compelled to obey it. All the glory, therefore, of that law belonged to Lord William Bentinck and his Council who passed it. But the present law would afford Hindu gentlemen of station and influence a rare opportunity of illustrating their own names. The present is not a compulsory law, and can not be made a compulsory law. It is merely a permissive law, which can have effect only when those for whose benefit it is intended, will choose to avail themselves of it. Under this law, Hindu gentlemen who, from their rank and their education, may stand forward as the leaders of their nation, have it in their power to register their names in History as the names of those who shall have effected the greatest social reform ever effected in their country. The Legislative Council will have done all it can do when it shall have struck the shackles from their limbs: it will be for them, when they shall gain their freedom, to make use of it like men.'

Most of the passages, given expression to by Grant in his introductory speech, were highly objectionable to a true Hindu, whether he belonged to the orthodox community or to the so-called progressive class, in as much as they were repugnant to every feeling heart, as Grant himself admitted it. Considering Vidyasagar's character, it must be thought strange that he and those who thought with him should have allowed themselves to put

up with such foul abuses. But Vidyasagar was then eagerly intent on the legislation, and he was not in a mood to venture to displease the members of the Legislative Council. In any other case, he was sure to have repudiated and protested the abuses in a strong language. He, however, did no such thing. On the contrary, he bore with them patiently, and tried his best to hurry on the enactment.

Sir John Colvile, another member of the Council, in rising to second Grant's motion, among other things, said,—‘Of the custom which is now under consideration, crime and immorality are not the necessary, but merely the probable consequences.’ Very true. What society is wholly free and pure from crime and immorality of the female sex? Is the European society, where remarriage of widows is not prohibited, but rather resorted to, to a large extent, wholly free from female vice? Are not abortions too frequent there? Are not illegitimate infants daily abandoned in the streets to be picked up by the Police to be taken away to the pauper-houses? Why then abuse a whole nation for a few sprinkled and rare instances of depravity among their women? Law cannot serve to make a nation or race pure. It is their own sense of right or wrong that can do so. We cannot conclude our remarks on this point better than by quoting Sir Barnes Peacock's views on the subject, given expression to on the occasion of the third reading of this Bill. Peacock said :—“ The Council had lately

a petition presented to it, asking for a law to shut up all taverns on Sundays with a view to check the open desecration of the Lord's day and the increasing vice of drunkenness, as if it were a greater crime to get drunk on the Sabbath than on any other day in the week ! The legislature prohibited the open desecration of every day, by acts injurious to Society. If a man, in a state of drunkenness, commits on any day an offence which is an injury to Society, the Law will punish him for his offence. But the Legislature does not follow every man into his private home to restrain him from drunkenness or other immoral conduct not affecting Society. It leaves that to his own conscience and his own sense of moral duty. A man's conscience is beyond the powers of Law, and it has been truly said that conscience is God's province." Such were the views of a right-minded Englishman. But he too was led on by the ideas of his own society to ultimately vote for the Bill.

Colville went on to say ;—"It may prevent the monstrous fact of a virgin widow condemned against her will to a life of mortification, by way of showing duty and respect to a deceased husband whose face she might never have seen, except at the hour of betrothal. It may prevent a vast deal of immorality, which, admitting the passages cited from Ward and others by my Honourable friend (Grant) to be highly coloured, every reason-

able man must see, is the natural consequence of enforced celibacy, and of violence done to nature ; and those domestic scandals which, I fear, are not unfrequently concealed by darker and graver crimes."

So we see that the tone of every member of the Council was the same. Practically with very little knowledge of the internal affairs of pure Hindu families, but affecting a great knowledge of them, these high officials of the British Government, who proclaimed neutrality in our religious matters and social customs, denounced in severe terms the customs of an ancient civilised nation, and abused them in filthy language.

Later on, Colvile remarked,—"The second section of the Bill removes the only plausible objection that could be made against the measure." *

*The 2nd Section ran as follows:—"All rights and interests which any widow may have by Law in her deceased husband's estate, either by way of maintenance or by inheritance, shall, upon her second marriage, cease and determine, as if she had then died ; and the next heirs of such deceased husband then leaving shall thereupon succeed to such estate.

"Provided that nothing in this section shall affect the rights of any widow in any estate or other property to which they may have succeeded otherwise than through her deceased husband or to which she may have become entitled under the will of her deceased husband ; or in any estate or other property which she may possess as *Stri-dhan*, or which she may have herself acquired either during the lifetime of her deceased husband or after his death."

Mr. P. W. LeGeyt, among other things, said :—"I have collected enough from what the Honourable Mover of the Bill (*i. e.* Grant) said, to feel assured that *a large majority of the higher classes of Hindus* will receive with gratitude the relief which this Bill will afford them of releasing the females of their families from a cruel and miserable thralldom which has produced the same lamentable results in Western India that the Honourable Mover of the Bill stated it has done in Bengal. I have seen in Hindu families of no mean rank in Bombay the pitiable condition of women suffering under the effects of this social tyranny."

The Italics are ours. What did LeGeyt mean by his "higher classes of Hindus?" Did he mean by it 'Vidyasagar and those who thought with him?' We have then nothing to say. But if he meant by it general Hindus of the upper section, then we must emphatically say that he was quite mistaken; for there were a number of petitions subscribed by over 60,000 Hindus of the *higher class* against the Bill, as the reader will see presently.

The Bill was read for the second time on the 19th January 1856. In moving the second reading, Grant said : - "I have allowed the Bill to be over for some time, because I have thought it right that a measure of this nature should not have the appearance of being hurried through the Council,

The Bill, however, has now been for two months before the public, and Hindus have had *ample time* to consider the measure even in the most remote provinces of the Empire."

So, in Grant's opinion, two months might be considered "ample time" for the discussion of such a weighty matter even in the remotest corners of the vast Peninsula ! Comment is superfluous.

The Bill was then read for a second time, and referred to a Select Committee consisting of Sir James Colvile, Mr. Eliott, Mr. LeGeyt, and Mr. Grant.

The Select Committee submitted their report on the 31st May, 1856. As was expected, their report was in favour of the enactment.

On the 12th July of the same year, the Council resolved itself into a Committee upon the Bill. In moving the motion, Grant said:—"Since the second reading of the bill, several petitions have been received from Hindus, some in favour of and some against the measure. I have taken a note of the places from which the petitions in favour of the measure have proceeded ; for I think it of great importance that the Council should observe that this is not the movement of one party in some one place, but that in many different parts of the country there is a considerable sprinkling of enlightened Hindus who are most earnest for the passing of this Law. I believe that there are upwards of 40 petitions against the Bill signed

by from 50,000 to 60,000 persons : in favour of the Bill, there are upwards of 25 petitions, signed by more than, 5,000 persons."

He then went on to refute the objections of the opposing petitions summarily, and concluded his speech by saying :—"If I know certainly that but one little girl would be saved from the horrors of Brahmacharyya by the passing of this Act, I will pass it, for her sake. If I believe as firmly, as I believe the contrary, that the Act would be wholly a dead letter, I will pass it for the sake of the English name."

So it is seen that Grant was determined on the passing of the Bill, even if it were *a dead letter*. It was, therefore, that he did not think fit to notice the places and the persons from whom so many opposing petitions came ! Was it very fair for a right-minded neutral Englishman ?

On the 19th July, 1856, the Bill was read for the third time, and passed into "Act XV of 1856, being an Act to remove all legal obstacles to the Marriage of Hindu Widows," which received the assent of the Governor-General on the 26th July, 1856, and became a Law of the country. The act, which was thus passed, runs as follows :—

ACT No. XV. OF 1856.

(Received the Governor-General's assent on the 26th July 1856).

An Act to remove all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu Widows.

PREAMBLE.

Whereas it is known that, by the law as administered in the Civil Court established in the territories in the possession and under the government of the East India Company, Hindu Widows, with certain exceptions, are held to be, by reason of their having been once married, incapable of contracting a second valid marriage, and the offspring of such widows by any second marriage are held to be illegitimate and incapable of inheriting property, and whereas many Hindus believe that this imputed legal incapacity, although it is in accordance with established custom, is not in accordance with a true interpretation of the precepts of their religion, and desire that the Civil law administered by the Courts of Justice shall no longer prevent those Hindus who may be so minded from adopting a different custom, in accordance with the dictates of their own consciences, and whereas it is just to relieve all such Hindus from this legal incapacity of which they complain; and the removal of all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows will tend to the promotion of good morals and to the public welfare: It is enacted as follows :—

MARRIAGE OF HINDU WIDOWS LEGALIZED.

1. No marriage contracted between Hindus shall be invalid, and the issue of no such marriage shall be illegitimate, by reason of the woman having been previously married or betrothed to another person who was dead at the time of such marriage, any custom and any interpretation of Hindu law to the contrary notwithstanding.

RIGHTS OF WIDOW IN DECEASED HUSBAND'S PROPERTY
TO CEASE ON HER REMARRIAGE.

2. All rights and interests which any widow may have in her deceased husband's property by way of maintenance, or by inheritance to her husband or to his lineal successors,

or by virtue of any will or testamentary disposition conferring upon her, without express permission to remarry, only limited interest in such property, with no power of alienating the same, shall, upon her re-marriage, cease and determine as if she had then died ; and the next heirs of her deceased husband, or other persons entitled to the property on her death, shall thereupon succeed to the same.

GUARDIANSHIP OF CHILDREN OF DECEASED HUSBAND

ON THE RE-MARRIAGE OF HIS WIDOW.

3. On the re-marriage of a Hindu Widow, if neither the widow nor any other person has been expressly constituted by the will or testamentary disposition of the deceased husband, the guardian of his children, the father or paternal grand-father, or the mother or paternal grandmother, of the deceased husband or any male relative of the deceased husband may petition the highest Court having original jurisdiction in civil cases in the place where the deceased husband was domiciled at the time of his death, for the appointment of some proper person to be guardian of the said children, and thereupon it shall be lawful for the said Court, if it shall think fit, to appoint such guardian, who, when appointed, shall be entitled to have the care and custody of the said children, or of any of them, during their minority, in the place of their mother ; and in making such appointment the Court shall be guided, so far as may be, by the laws and rules in force touching the guardianship of children who have neither father nor mother.

Provided that, when the said children have not property of their own sufficient for their support and proper education whilst minors, no such appointment shall be made otherwise than with the consent of the mother ; unless the proposed guardian shall have given security for the support and proper education of the children whilst minors.

**NOTHING IN THIS ACT TO RENDER ANY CHILDLESS
WIDOW CAPABLE OF INHERITING.**

4. Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to render any widow, who, at the time of the death of any person leaving any property, is a childless widow capable of inheriting the whole or any share of such property if, before the passing of this Act, she would have been incapable of inheriting the same by reason of her being a childless widow.

**SAVING OF RIGHTS OF WIDOW MARRYING EXCEPT AS
PROVIDED IN THE THREE PRECEDING SECTIONS**

(2, 3 AND 4.)

5. Except as in the three preceding Sections is provided, a widow shall not, by reason of her re-marriage, forfeit any property, or any right to which she would otherwise be entitled; and every widow who has remarried shall have the same rights of inheritance as she would have, had such marriage been her first marriage.

**WHATEVER CEREMONIES NOW CONSTITUTE VALID
MARRIAGE SHALL HAVE THE SAME EFFECT ON
THE MARRIAGE OF A WIDOW.**

6. Whatever words spoken, ceremonies performed, or engagements made, on the marriage of a Hindu female who has not been previously married, are sufficient to constitute a valid marriage, have the same effect, if spoken, performed, or made on the marriage of a Hindu Widow; and no marriage shall be declared invalid on the ground that such words, ceremonies, or engagements are inapplicable to the case of a widow.

**CONSENT OF RE-MARRIAGE OF A WIDOW
WHO IS A MINOR.**

7. If the widow remarrying is a minor whose marriage has not been consummated, she shall not remarry without the consent of her father, or, if she has no father, of her paternal grand-father, or, if she has no such grand-father,

of her mother, or failing all these, of her elder brother, or, failing also brothers, of her next male relative.

**PUNISHMENT FOR ABETTING MARRIAGE MADE
CONTRARY TO THIS SECTION.**

All persons knowingly abetting a marriage made contrary to the provisions of this section shall be liable to imprisonment for any term not exceeding one year or, to fine, or, to both.

EFFECT OF SUCH MARRIAGE.

And all marriages made contrary to the provisions of this Section may be declared void by a Court of law.

PROVISO.

Provided that, in any question regarding the validity of a marriage made contrary to the provisions of this section, such consent as is aforesaid shall be presumed until the contrary is proved, and that no such marriage shall be declared void after it has been consummated.

CONSENT TO RE-MARRIAGE OF MAJOR WIDOW.

In the case of a widow who is of full age, or whose marriage has been consummated, her own consent shall be sufficient consent to constitute her re-marriage lawful and valid.

So, notwithstanding the pledges and assurances of Government of its now interference with the laws of marriage and inheritance of its Indian subjects, and in spite of more than 40 petitions from upwards of 60,000 Hindus of the higher class against the innovation, the Act was passed at the instance of an infinitesimal minority. We have not space to quote all these petitions. We will, therefore, content ourselves by giving space to one or two, that were most important.

(A.)

"To

"THE HONORABLE

"THE LEGISLATIVE

"COUNCIL OF INDIA.

"The humble Petition of the

"Undersigned Inhabitants of

"Calcutta and the Lower

"Provinces of Bengal.

MOST RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH,

"That your Petitioners have read with much concern the Draft of a Bill entitled, "A Bill to remove all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu Widows," which was read by your Honorable Council for the first time on the 17th November last, and for the second time, on the 19th January. Your Petitioners are aware, from the printed papers of your Honorable Council, that the said Bill has been brought in, on the Petition of certain Hindus who desire that Widow Marriage should be legalized. Your Petitioners are also sensible that the principle of the said Bill is consonant with the social system of their English fellow-subjects, and therefore is likely to be acceptable to your Honorable Council; yet your Petitioners cannot but feel it as a duty, as well to themselves as Hindus as to their countrymen in general, to submit their objections to the proposed law.

"2. The preamble to the Bill states that, "whereas it is known that by the law as administered in the Civil Courts established in the territories in the possession and under the government of the East India Company, Hindu Widows with some exceptions are held to be, by reason of their having been once married, incapable of contracting a second valid marriage, and the offspring of such widows by

any second marriage are held to be illegitimate and incapable of inheriting property; and whereas many Hindus believe that this imputed legal incapacity, although it is in accordance with established custom, is not in accordance with a true interpretation of the precepts of their religion, and desire that the Civil law administered by the Courts of Justice, shall no longer prevent those Hindus who may be so minded from adopting a different custom in accordance with the dictates of their own consciences," &c.

"3. Your Petitioners beg leave to observe that the remarriage of Hindu females is not only not in accordance with the established usages of Hindus, but is likewise repugnant to the precepts of their religion and the ordinations of Hindu law, from which all their social institutions have originated. Though there are different tribes of Hindus, who speak different tongues, follow different codes of laws, wear different dresses, and have different customs and usages, yet they are all unanimous in reprehending the marriage of their widows, in consequence of its being against the positive injunctions of their law, and the interpretations of that law by different commentators of ancient and modern times. The *Yajur Veda* in the *Taittiriya Shakha* declares that "as round a single *Yupa* (sacrificial post) two tethers can be tied, so one person can marry two wives. As one tether cannot be tied round two *Yupas*, so one female can not marry two husbands." The most ancient and revered of our lawgivers, Manu, says in Chapter V. verse 161, that "a widow who, from a wish to bear children, slights her deceased husband by marrying again, brings disgrace on herself here below, and shall be excluded from the seat of her lord." And also at the following verse, "issue begotten on a woman by any other than her husband, is here declared to be no progeny of hers; no more than a child, begotten on the wife of another man, belongs to the begetter; nor is a second husband allowed

in any part of this code to a virtuous woman." The same authority further directs in Chapter IX verses 64 and 65, that "by men of twice-born classes no widow or childless wife must be authorized to conceive by any other than her lord; for they who authorize her to conceive by any other, violate the primeval law. Such a commission to a brother, or other near kinsman, is nowhere mentioned in the nuptial texts of the Veda; nor is the marriage of a widow even named in the laws concerning marriage." The *Mahabharat*, too, lays down that "a woman is to have only one husband, upon whom she must depend through her whole life." These ordinations in the highest sacred works of the Hindus, added to the long established custom and usage of the country, against the marriage of widows, will, your Petitioners trust, weigh more in the estimation of your Honorable Council than the forced construction of any solitary text apparently in its favour, but quite unsupported by a single instance of such marriage having ever been legally contracted in any period of the annals of the Hindus. Your Honorable Council will thus perceive that the marriage of Hindu widows is not in accordance with the dictates of Hindu law, as it is stated in the preamble to the Bill for the removal of legal obstacles to such marriages.

"4. Your Petitioners further beg leave to submit that the proposed law is also at variance with the several Statutes of the British Parliament and the Regulations of the East India Company, by which the natives of this country have from time to time been assured that their rights of marriage and inheritance shall not be disturbed or violated. Section 23 of Regulation I. of 1772, which was re-enacted in Section 15 of Regulation IV. of 1793, ordains that, in all suits regarding succession, inheritance, marriage, and caste, and all religious usages and institutions, the Mahomedan law shall prevail in respect of Mahomedans and the Hindu law in regard to Hindus. This is also laid down in

the 21 George III. Chap. 70 Sections 17, 18 and 19. The 3 and 4 William IV. Chap. 85 Section 53 expressly provides that, in making any law for the natives of this country, a due regard should be had to their religion, customs, laws, and usages. The more subsequent Regulation V of 1831 declares that cases relating to the marriage, succession, and inheritance of Mahomedans shall be decided according to Mahomedan law, and those concerning the Hindus shall be adjudicated according to Hindu law. These repeated declarations of the British Parliament and the local Government have induced a firm belief that the natives of this country would be continued in the enjoyment of their laws relating to marriage, succession, and inheritance. Even in the General Order recently issued by the Governor-General in Council in reference to the late disturbance at Bolarum and the conduct of Brigadier Mackenzie on the occasion, the public officers were enjoined in the strongest manner "never to interfere with the religious observances of the natives of India." When the late Law Commission in 1837. applied to the Sadar Courts at the several Presidencies for their opinions on the subject of Hindu Widow Marriage, the Judges of those Courts unanimously observed that the legalization of such marriage "would be an interference with the Hindus in the matter of their own law and religion and at once dislocate the whole frame-work of Hindu jurisprudence." The Hindu Society has undergone no material change whatever since that year, which would warrant the Legislature to interfere with the Hindu law on the ground of expediency. Its integrity, it is true, has been most seriously affected by the enactment of Act XXI of 1850, but your Petitioners submit that one encroachment does not justify another ; and what is of more importance, the said law has not increased the number of native converts to Christianity. The experience of the last six years shows that, practically, it has been of no more use than affording an example of an

arbitrary and uncalled-for interference with the Hindu law of inheritance. Legislative intervention has never yet been able to effect a change in public opinion, while the more such interference is exercised, the more it assumes an objectionable character.

"5. Your Petitioners have been told that the Bill for the removal of legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows, is merely a *Permissive* law. In reply they beg leave to observe that, so far as it allows a widow to contract a second marriage, at her option, it is undoubtedly of a permissive character, but in its immediate and ultimate consequences, when it interferes with the rights of others, your Petitioners humbly submit, that it is a *compulsory* measure. As for example, if a Hindu dies leaving two daughters, both of whom are widows, but the one has a son, and the other no children; by the Hindu law of inheritance as it is now administered, that son will be the sole heir of his maternal grandfather. But if the childless widow contracts a second marriage and has issue by her second husband, by the proposed law they would be entitled to equal shares of the property of their mother's father with the son, of the widow who has not re-married. Again, if a married woman dies, leaving two sons, who have acquired property. Their father marries a widow and dies leaving a son by her. One of the brothers has children while the other has not; but both of them subsequently die. By the Hindu law the said children will succeed to the whole of that property; but by the proposed law, the son of the widow will not only share equally with the two brothers at first, but will also succeed to the share of the deceased among them to the exclusion of the said children. Again, a person dies leaving a widow, but no issue, and directs her by his will to adopt a son and heir. If before the adoption takes place, she contracts a second marriage, she cannot carry out the directions of her deceased husband according to Hindu law; and the consequence will

be that his line will be extinct ; that he and his ancestors will have none to perform the usual funeral ceremonies prescribed by the Hindu religion ; and that, whatever property he may have left, will go to his next of kin, who by the proposed law, will find it to their interest to induce the widow to marry, and thus defeat the intentions of her first husband for their own benefit.

"6. Your Petitioners can, to an unlimited extent, multiply instances in which the proposed law for marriage of Hindu Widows will operate against the civil rights of others who may prefer to follow the laws and usages of their country—a consequence which had, no doubt, been anticipated by the Judges of the several Sadar Courts, when they gave it as their opinion that the legalization of such marriages would amount to an interference with the customs and laws of the Hindus, and would at once upset their present system of jurisprudence. If the Petitioners in favour of Widow Marriage be disposed to adopt "a different custom in accordance with the dictates of their own consciences," as it is stated in the preamble to the Bill, your Petitioners have no objection whatever to their doing so ; but when the law which they have asked for interferes with the rights of others, who entertain different opinions and are not inclined to follow their example, their demand is manifestly unjust and unreasonable. The Petitioners at whose instance the proposed law has been brought in, form a very small and insignificant portion of the vast masses of the people whom your Petitioners represent. It would, therefore, be scarcely just and reasonable, or even expedient, to enact a law for the minority which shall interfere with the rights of the majority. As far as your Petitioners have been able to communicate with the people of the interior, during the short space of two months, which has elapsed between the first and second reading of the Bill, they have found but one opinion exist among all classes of men, and that opi-

nion is, your Petitioners need hardly say, against the proposed law ; and if the fact of that law being under the consideration of your Honorable Council be made known still more extensively, your Petitioners are sure the general voice of the entire Hindu population will be raised against its enactment. The great majority of the people of this country have yet had no intimation of the proceedings which have been held in respect of the Bill for the legalization of the marriage of Hindu Widows. They have no knowledge of the English language, and do not read the English newspapers in which the reports of your Honorable Council appear. The Bill made its appearance in the *Bengal Government Gazette* only on the 12th February ; but still that would not be sufficient, as the Bengali language is only read and understood in only one of the provinces out of the immense extent of territories subject to British rule in India, and that, too, by a comparatively small portion of its inhabitants. Its enactment will, therefore, be without the knowledge of the people whose interests are to be affected by it. If they know of it, your Petitioners are certain they would object to it, and it would be unwise to pass it into law on the application of a few against the wishes of the hundred thousands of the Hindus who own allegiance to the British Crown in India.

“ 7. Your Petitioners also beg leave to submit that the proposed law for the legalization of Hindu Widow Marriage is vague and insufficient ; since it does not declare what shall constitute a valid widow marriage. The rite of matrimony is held sacred in all countries and by all nations. It is one of the ten *Sanskars* or sacramental rites of the Hindus. Its details are no-where left to the option of individuals ; yet such would be the case if the Bill for the removal of all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu Widows be passed into law as it now stands. The ceremony which at present prevails among Hindus, cannot be per-

formed in the case of a widow taking another husband, "The holy nuptial texts," says Manu in Chap. 8, Verse 226, "are applied solely to virgins, and no-where on earth to girls who have lost their virginity." Again in Chapter 9. Verse 47. "Once is the partition of an inheritance made, once is a damsel given in marriage, and once does a man say 'I give.' These three are by good men done once for all and irrecoverably." It will, therefore, be necessary to prescribe a new ritual in opposition to the dictates of Hindu Law and Religion to prevent its being a source of much litigation, which it otherwise necessarily lead to. Such a result cannot surely be the object of the Bill which is now before your Honorable Council. Your Petitioners also beg leave to submit that many Hindu widows, if remarried, at an early age, under the proposed law, might regard their second union as a degradation and wrong, when at a mature age they come to know the religion and laws of their country.

"8. Under these circumstances your petitioners beg leave to submit that the Bill "to remove all legal obstacles to the marriage of Hindu widows" should not be passed into law, and that your Petitioners, and the rest of their countrymen, who prefer to follow the established laws and usages of their country, will be permitted to continue in the enjoyment of their civil rights as they have heretofore done.

"And your petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray.

"RAJA RADHAKANT BAHADUR,

"And Thirty-six Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-three other signatures."

"CALCUTTA, 17th March 1856.

(B)

" To

" THE HONORABLE
THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF
INDIA.

" The Petition of the undersigned

" Professors of the Hindu law,

" Inhabitants of *Nuddea, Tre-*" *beni, Bhatparah, Bansbariah,*

" Calcutta, and other places.

" HUMBLY SWEWETH,

" THAT your Petitioners being apprised that one Ishwar-chandar Vidyasagar, *Modern Pandit*, has lately, in conjunction with a few young men of the rising class, petitioned your Honorable Council to legislate on the subject of the Marriage of Hindu Widows, and that a bill relating to it has been brought in—think it necessary most respectfully to draw your attention to their prayers on the subject.

" 1st. That the Marriage of Hindu Widows is prohibited in the Veda, the Smriti, the Puranas, and other Shastras.

" That the advocates of widow marriage, who maintain that it is authorized by the Hindu Law, and who have therefore petitioned your Honorable Council to legislate in its behalf, are, in their opinions and constructions, utterly at variance with the whole range of the Hindu legal compilers and commentators. For the texts pointed out by the former as sanctioning widow marriage, have invariably been explained and asserted by the latter to refer to betrothed girls, and to widow sin the past yogas (ages). And in truth all the digests of the Hindu Law which have regulated Hindu manners, customs, and religious practices, from time immemorial, not only nowhere authorize widow marriage, but on the contrary expressly discountenance it. The following

extracts from the digests in question, are quoted for your information.

RATNAKAR.

"Moreover the verses of Devala, who sanctions the re-marriage of women, declaring that a married woman whose husband has left her, shall wait for eight years, and after that take another husband ; and that she may do the same under the circumstances specified therein, refer to former yogas, as also does the appointment of a widow to a brother or some other near kinsman for the purpose of raising issue."

"But a widow, who from a wish to bear children, slights her deceased husband by marrying again, brings disgrace on herself here below, and shall be excluded from the seat of her lord."

"Issue begotten on a woman by any other than her husband, is here declared to be no progeny of hers : no more than a child begotten on the wife of another man, belongs to the begetter, nor is a second husband allowed in any part of this code to a virtuous woman."

"Such a commission to a brother or other near kinsman is no where mentioned in the nuptial texts of the Veda ; nor is the marriage of a widow even named in the laws concerning marriage."

MAHABHARAT, 1ST BOOK.

"From this day I enact that a woman have only one husband as long as she lives, and whether he be alive or dead, if she go to another man, she shall doubtless be degraded."

ADITYA PURANA.

"The marriage of a widow, a larger allotment to the eldest brother, the sacrifice of a bull, the appointment of a man to beget a son on the widow of his brother, and the carrying of a water pot as the token of an ascetic, these five are prohibited in the Kali Yoga, or the fourth age."

The veda says :—"As round one sacrificial post two cords are fastened, so one man may marry two wives ; but, as one cord is not fastened round two sacrificial posts, so one woman cannot have two husbands."

The code of Manu says :—"Him to whom her father has given her or her brother with the paternal assent, let her obsequiously honor, while he lives ; and when he dies, let her never neglect him."

"Let her emaciate her body, by living voluntarily on pure flowers, roots and fruit ; but let her not, when her lord is deceased, even pronounce the name of another man."

"Let her continue till death forgiving all injuries, performing harsh duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, and cheerfully practising the incomparable rules of virtue, which have been followed by such women as were devoted to one only husband."

"And like those abstemious men, a virtuous wife ascends to heaven, though she have no child, if, after the decease of her lord, she devote herself to pious austerity."

NIRNAYA SINDHU.

"A woman, even if she has been married, may be given away to another with clothes and ornaments. This and similar customs are prohibited in the Kali Yug, because the Adi Purana says, that 'procreation of a son by a brother, the giving away of a married woman, and the like, are not to take place in the Kali Yug.'

HIMADRI.

* Prohibitions in the Kali Yug :—The marriage of a widow the gift of a larger portion to the eldest brother, the sacrifice of a bull, the appointment of a man to beget a son on the widow of his brother, and the carrying of a water-pot as the token of an ascetic, these five are prohibited in the Kali Yug."

MADAN PARIJAT.

"The marriage of a widow, the gift of a larger portion to

the eldest brother, the sacrifice of a bull, the appointment of a man to beget a son on the widow of his brother, and the carrying of a water-pot as the token of an ascetic, these five are prohibited in the Kali Yug."

"2ndly. That the marriage of a Hindu widow of respectability is contrary to the customs and usages of the country. Among the Hindus of India, there are various customs and usages on various occasions, and the people of the several provinces observe them according to various Shastras ; but the marriage of a widow is not in accordance with the customs and usages of any province, and none of the codes of law in force sanctions it. The practice of austerity by all Hindu widows has been customary from time immemorial ; so that, not to mention the marriage of a widow, even her intercourse with a stranger renders her liable to expulsion from society. Now, if your Honorable Council, with a view of introducing widow marriage, legislate on the subject, the Vedas, Smritis, Puranas, and other religious institutes, and the customs and usages of time immemorial, will fall to the ground. To subvert the religion and usages of the subjects is not the province of the Legislature. Monu says—" A king who knows the revealed law, must inquire into the particular laws of classes, the laws or usages of districts, the customs of traders, and the rules of certain families, and establish their peculiar laws if they be not repugnant to the law of God."

"3rdly. That, if your Honorable Council legislate on the subject of widow marriage, the rules of inheritance now prevalent among the Hindus will undergo great alterations. Though the offspring of such a marriage cannot, according to the received law and reputable manners of the country, be regarded otherwise than as illegitimate, or children of harlots, yet in case you legislate on the subject, the truly lawful heirs will be compelled to share the inheritance equally with them. The Code of Hindu law on inherit-

ance, which is now of equal weight with the Government and its subjects, must be materially altered or supplanted by an entirely new one to prevent endless disputes arising from the collision of opposing interests, when persons who are not at present of kin to the legal heirs recognized by the Shastras, or by the customs of the country, will be placed on a footing of equality with them. The passing of the proposed Bill into law will not only, without any cause whatever, endanger the property of many an innocent individual, but in several cases altogether deprive him of it. A few cases of very probable occurrence illustrative of the above position, are most respectfully submitted for your consideration.

“If one's father, brother, brother's son, grandfather, or father's brother, or the like, in spite of the Shastras and the established customs, marry a widow and beget a son on her, and die, that son, armed with the law, will usurp the place of a brother, or brother's son and so forth, and thus divide the property of the deceased with rightful heirs, if such deceased have left no widow and children who are legal according to the Shastras. And sometimes, by his claim of priority, he will nullify the rights of lawful heirs. Similarly, if a widow take a second husband, though it be in opposition to her father's wishes, she may even then, on her father's dying without male issue or other heirs, be entitled to inherit his estate. Again, if she marry in opposition to the wishes of her brother, her son, in the event her brother's dying without male issue, will stand in point of relationship as his nephew or the grandson of his father and thus be entitled to inherit his property. In like manner, if the widow be a mother, or mother's or father's sister, or paternal or maternal aunt, or grandmother or brother's wife, and in marry in opposition to the wishes of her son or other relatives, the male children she may give birth to, will usurp the place of brothers and so forth, and contend

for inheritance. Now it is most respectfully submitted to your consideration, whether or not the proposed Act will deprive many rightful heirs of their inheritance, and wholly upset the Hindu law on that subject.

"4thly. That there is the greatest probability of extinguishing the name of many a family by the passing of an Act authorizing the marriage of Hindu widows, and thereby concurring civil rights on the issue of such marriages. For in addition to the sanction of the Shastras, almost every childless man in this country enjoins his wife, in his dying moments, to adopt a son for the perpetuation of the family name. But if the Bill be passed, the desire of worldly enjoyment will induce the widow to take a second husband, and thus slighting the injunctions of her former lord about adoption, she will consign his family name to oblivion.

"5thly. In the event of the Bill being passed many a widow, otherwise disposed to observe the injunctions of her own religion, will, in all probability, by the intrigues of her avaricious kinsmen, sacrifice her honor; for the women of this country being mostly ignorant, and not being accustomed to read, write, and mix in society, it is difficult for them to detect the insidiousness of the cunning and evil disposed. It is therefore that our Shastras have not given them independence in any stage of their lives.

"Manu says:—In childhood must a female be dependent on her father; in youth on her husband; her lord being dead, on her sons; a woman must never seek independence." Moreover, in conformity to Our Shastras, a widow can inherit her husband's estate. Hence if any person die without male issue, leaving a widow, his brothers, through avarice, will use force and intrigue to induce her to take a second husband, that they may come into her rightful possessions. Thus innumerable widows will have cause to bewail the loss of their honour,

"6thly. That, though the Bill has been brought in for the benefit of the people, the perusal of the foregoing paragraphs will not fail to convince your Honourable Council, that, instead of producing the good intended, it will injure their temporal and spiritual interests. Besides, those who have petitioned your Honourable Council for such an enactment, cannot by any possibility derive any advantage from it. For at present widow marriage does not obtain in this country, nor can persons be found who are the offspring of such marriages.

In conclusion, your Petitioners most humbly but earnestly protest against a Bill which is opposed to the whole of their Shastras ; which is contrary to the customs and usages of the most respectable portion of your Hindu subjects throughout the country ; which, when passed into law, will create endless confusion in their order of successions prevalent from time immemorial, give rise to numberless, disputes, and necessitate the framing of a new code on Inheritance for deciding those disputes ; by which the property of many a Hindu subject will not only be endangered but even destroyed : from which no party can reasonably expect any present advantage ; which will consign the names of many families to oblivion ; which will tempt not a few wicked people to betray innocent widows into vicious courses, that they may deprive them of their husband's estates ? and they pray that the discerning Legislature of the British Government, which is so careful of the interests of its subjects, will not pass such a Bill into law.

"Your petitioners are most loyal subjects of your Government. It is not less, the duty of that Government to maintain their religion and customs than to protect their lives and property. Your Petitioners do not pretend to direct your Council, nor have they the power to oppose your designs. As children ask indulgence from their parents, so

do they supplicate your Honorable Council. Besides, the boon they are now solicitous to obtain from your Honors, is neither exceptionable nor unjust ; for every nation is naturally eager to preserve its religion uncorrupt. It is only the apprehension of interference on your part with their religion which has induced your Petitioners to approach you, in the hope that their prayers will prevail and prevent you from legislating on the subject of widow marriage.

"And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

(Signed) "SHRIRAM SHIROMONI and others,"

The Act was passed. But the people did not come forward to marry their widowed daughters or sisters. From the eagerness with which the advocates of widow marriage had looked out for the legislation, many thought naturally that they had been only waiting for the Law to marry the widowed girls under their care. But, in fact, such was not the case. Most of the subscribers to the petitions in favour of the innovation had put down their names out of curiosity for novelty, and some had done so under pressure of influential bodies. No sooner was the novelty gone, than they, one by one, began to forsake the party, for they had not espoused the cause from the impulse of their own hearts. For four complete months, even after the passing of the Act, no body ventured to take the initiative. On this point, it would be better to quote what the writer of "The Hindu Child Widow" has said : —

"In spite of warnings and clamours, he (*i. e.*

Lord Canning) legalised the remarriage of Hindu
widows. * * *

"It has proved a dead letter. Not only does it fail to secure to a widow her civil rights to property inherited from her husband, but it has not in the least degree mitigated the religious abhorrence with which orthodox Hindus regard such remarriages. After careful enquiry from the leaders of the Hindu remarriage movement, who run no danger of minimising its results, I can only hear of sixty remarriages under the Act of 1856." So that, since the enactment of the Law, there have not been more than seventy marriages at the most up to date.

The first marriage contracted under this Act, took place on the 7th December, 1856, certainly a memorable day in the history of the remarriage of Hindu widows. The bridegroom was Sris Chandra Vidyaratna, son of the illustrious Pandit Ramdhan Tarkavagis of Khantura. The bride was Kalimati Devi, widowed daughter of Lakshmimani Devi, also a widow, the father of the bride having died sometime before this marriage. It is needless to say that the marriage was consummated through the strenuous exertions of Vidyasagar, who had to spend a good sum of money on it. The marriage was celebrated in the house of Raj Krishna Banarji at Sukea's Street. On the night of the eventful day, there was so great a rush of people in the streets leading to Raj Krishna Babu's

house, that the bridegroom's palanquin could proceed through them only with utmost difficulty. It is said, that Vidyasagar himself and some of his most influential followers escorted the palanquin on both sides of it, for he had apprehended a riot. He had, therefore already applied for Police help, and constables had been posted one yard apart, in all the streets through which the bridegroom was to pass, to prevent the contingent riot. Some say, that Vidyasagar's friend, Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, was, in fact, the match-maker of this union. He knew both the parties, and encouraged them to form this alliance. Sris Chandra was Judge-Pandit of Murshidabad in place of Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, since the latter had been made a Deputy Magistrate. So it is probable, that he might have induced Sris Chandra to enter into this union, but it is not known whether he contributed any amount to Vidyasagar's widow marriage fund.

Different versions of the celebration of this marriage appeared in the different vernacular periodicals. The *Samachar Chandrika*, the *Sangbad Prabhakar*, and the *Bhaskar* were the leading Bengali newspapers of the day, besides some other fortnightly and monthly magazines. Gaurisankar Bhattacharyya, otherwise known as Gurgure Bhattacharyya, was the editor of the *Bhaskar*, and the poet Isvar Chandra Gupta was the editor of the *Sangbad Prabhakar*. These two papers sided

with the two parties, the one was for, and the other, against, the innovation, and they gave quite conflicting accounts of the first Hindu widow marriage. The *Tattvabodhini*, the best conducted magazine of the day of the so-called progressive class, filled its columns with a detailed account of this marriage.

From this account, which is the more creditable, it is seen that Vidyasagar gave the bride her nuptial dress and ornaments, and also defrayed other expenses out of his own pocket.

By slow degrees, several such marriages were celebrated during the life-time of Vidyasagar, each of which cost him a good sum of money. Besides, he had to provide for the maintenance of many poor families, who were boycotted from Society and persecuted in different ways for contracting widow-marriage or for associating with those who had ventured to enter into such alliance, which was looked upon with abhorrence by the majority of the Hindus. Vidyasagar's limited income from his books, for he had afterwards no other means, was not at all sufficient to cope with these various heavy outlays, and he had to contract debts to the fearful amount of nearly half a *lakh* of rupees.

The Hon'ble C. E. Buckland, in his 'Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors', says,—“Vidyasagar was a Hindu of the orthodox type, but he felt the position of inferiority assigned to the women in India, and on their behalf he started

the widow-marriage movement * * * when the Indian Legislature passed an Act in 1856 legalising the marriage of Hindu widows, the first widow marriage under the Act took place in Calcutta in December 1856. It was followed by others, both in the Presidency town and in the district of Hooghly and Midnapore. * * *

The several pamphlets issued in justification of his views show unrivalled powers of reasoning as well as deep knowledge of the Hindu scriptures and legal books. To help the movement he ran heavily into debt, which he lived long enough to clear." Of course, some of his friends helped him, now and then, with money, but that was too small to meet the demands. Besides, most of those, who had promised him large contributions, forsook him one by one like birds of passage. In a few years, his embarrassments grew upon him so heavily, that he had to seek re-entrance into public service, though without success, of which in its proper place.

But he was not dispirited or dejected in the slightest degree. He was as resolutely firm as a rock. He had made the remarriage of Hindu widows the chiefest aim of his life. He was a victim to much persecution at the hands of his opponents. Some even went so far as to attempt at his life. But he was never daunted in the least. Nothing could move him a hair from his life-long aim. When his father, Thakurdas, heard that the life of his dear son was at risk, he sent a club-

man, by name Srimanta, to act as body-guard to Vidyasagar. This Srimanta was as strong in muscles as he was dexterous in fencing with his club. It was with the help of this man, that Vidyasagar saved himself one night, when a number of his opponents attempted to fall upon him with an evil intent.

It is said that, at this period, whenever he went out into the streets, people surrounded him on all sides. Some threw at him vile taunts, while others abused him in filthy language ; some threatened him with assaults, while others went so far as to threaten him with murder. But he cared very little for these insults and threats. One day, he was told that a certain wealthy man had engaged men to waylay and beat him, and the men were looking out for an opportunity to carry out their vicious master's orders. Vidyasagar at once presented himself before the rich man at his residence, where he was engaged in deep consultation with his flatterers and dependents, anticipating the sweet pleasure of chastising the wicked Pandit. At his sight, every one of the company hung down his head in shame, and could not give utterance to a word. At last, one of their number ventured to break silence, and ask the visitor the cause of his sudden appearance. Vidyasagar replied,—‘I hear, you have engaged men to beat me, and they are always on the look out for me. To save them from their trouble, I have thought it better to present

myself before you. You may now carry out your wishes.' The audience bowed down their head in shame, and apologised for their ill conduct.

Several amusing stories are told in connection with the abusive language thrown at him by his opponents. On one occasion, when he was returning to Calcutta from Burdwan, a Pandit got up into Vidyasagar's compartment from the Pandua Station. This Pandit happened not to know Vidyasagar personally, but had merely heard his name. In course of conversation, the Pandit began to talk of widow marriage, and abused Vidyasagar (not knowing that the man, he was talking to, was Vidyasagar in person) in the filthiest language possible. Subsequently when he alighted at the Hugli Station, he was told that the man, he had talked to, was Vidyasagar himself. The news gave him such a shock, that he fell down senseless on the platform. Vidyasagar nursed him with good care, and gave him some money, besides, for his treatment.

About the time that the country was in great commotion on account of Vidyasagar's movement, Mr. Pratt, an Inspector of Schools, asked him one day, whose was the best protest of all that had appeared against his paper. By way of joke, Vidyasagar named one, who had abused him the most. Pratt could not grasp the joke. He took down the name of the man, and in a short time, made him a Deputy Inspector of Schools. When

the man came to know the true source of his good fortune, he, one day, waited upon Vidyasagar, and requested him to see that he did not lose his appointment. Vidyasagar smiled and comforted him, assuring him that he had no fear on that account.

Some say that Premchand Tarkavagis, his former teacher in the Sanskrit College, whom he looked upon and revered as if he was his own father, once tried to dissuade him from his attempts at the innovation which was not consonant with the feelings of the Hindu Society in general, and which they would neither adopt nor approve of. But Vidyasagar was immovable. He said that it was his life-long aim, and that he was prepared to sacrifice his all, even his life, for the furtherance of the cause. And he practically kept his word.

CHAPTER XVII.

RETIREMENT FROM PUBLIC SERVICE.

Although Vidyasagar was thus engaged in various toilsome works, he never lost sight of writing Bengali School books. On the 13th April 1855, appeared his *Varna-Parichaya, Part I.*, and on the 14th June of the same year, appeared his *Varna-Parichaya, Part II.*, both of which were elementary Readers, intended for the use of the beginners. He was the pioneer of the systematic classification of the Bengali Alphabet into Vowels

and Consonants. Both the little works testify to his creative faculties.

Babu Pyari Charan Sarkar, one of the late professors of English in the Calcutta Presidency College, was among Vidyasagar's dearest friends. One day, when the two were sitting in the house of Pyari Babu, engaged in friendly chat, it was settled between them that Vidyasagar should write Bengali School-books, and Babu Pyari Charan Sarkar should apply himself to the compilation of School-books in English. As fruits of this arrangement, many English and Bengali elementary Readers were soon issued by them. Vidyasagar's two *Varna-Parichayas* did not, at first, meet with much appreciation. But gradually they rose in estimation.

In July, 1856, appeared his *Charitavali*. It contains short biographical sketches of such illustrious persons, as Duval, Roscoe, and others, who, though poor in their early years, rose to greatness and eminence by dint of assiduity and perseverance. Its language is beautifully easy and plain.

The University of Calcutta was established in January, 1857. Lord Canning, the greatest European friend that the country ever has had, was then the Governor-General of India. His predecessor in office, Lord Dalhousie, had made all preliminary arrangements, but had left to his successor their consummation. The number of members, at its inception, was 39, of whom only 6 were

natives, and of these six, two were Mussulmans. Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Rama Prasad Ray, Ram Gopal Ghosh, and Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar were the Hindu members. At a meeting of the University, shortly after its foundation, a motion was brought forward for the exclusion of Sanskrit from the University and for the abolition of the Sanskrit College. Vidyasagar opposed the motion, and by arguments convinced the other members of the inadvisability of the step. It was mainly through his exertions that the motion was negatived, and the Sanskrit College saved from imminent destruction. At the meeting of the 28th November of that year, a Board of Examiners was framed for conducting the different examinations, and Vidyasagar was appointed Examiner of Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi, and Uriya. In fact, Vidyasagar had so much influence with the authorities of the time, that it is said, that at the University Convocation for that year, Lord Bishop had his seat on the right of the Chancellor (Governor-General), and Vidyasagar, on the left.

Lord Dalhousie had formed a "Central Committee" for conducting the examinations of the civilians of the Fort William College in the different vernacular languages of the country. Vidyasagar was a member of this committee. In fact, he was connected with all the educational bodies of the time.

Some time before this, Vidyasagar's great

friend, Dr. Mouat, Secretary to the Education Council, had left India and gone home on leave. Mr. W. G. Young, a young civilian, was acting in his place.

In 1856, F. J. Halliday, the first Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, remodelled the education Department. The Council of Education was done away with, and the post of its Secretary was converted to that of the "Director of Public Instruction," whose office took the place of the Education Council. W. G. Young was posted as the first Director of Public Instruction. This Young was a young officer without experience. Vidyasagar had, therefore, advised Halliday to appoint an experienced man to the post, instead of the young Young, but he had then been told by the Lieutenant Governor that practically he would do everything. Vidyasagar had also been requested to train up Young, which he did for some time. But, unfortunately, Vidyasagar's fears were not unfounded, as the reader will soon see.

Halliday regarded Vidyasagar with sincere love and esteem, and Vidyasagar reciprocated the same feelings. In fact, the two had a great friendly intimacy between them. Such intimacy is hardly to be found now-a-days between a white European and a black native. Vidyasagar waited upon the Lieutenant Governor every Thursday, when the two friends talked and consulted on various matters, general as well as political,

If he ever omitted to call at the Belvedere, on a Thursday, his friend would send for him. On one occasion, it so happened that Vidyasagar had not called on the appointed day. Halliday was very anxious for him. By chance, Raja Rajendra Lala Mallik of Chorbagan had gone there to have an interview with the Lieutenant Governor, who after the business was over, requested him to see Vidyasagar that very night and send him on to Belvedere. Rajendra Lala did as he was desired, and Vidyasagar called at the Belvedere on the next morning. On another occasion, when Vidyasagar presented himself at the Lieutenant Governor's palace, he saw several respectable gentlemen waiting in the Drawing-room for an interview with the Governor. Halliday was then upstairs, and as soon as Vidyasagar's card was presented to him, he at once sent for his friend, keeping the other gentlemen in suspense. Vidyasagar used to visit Halliday in his usual native dress (a plain *Dhuti* and *Chadar* without even a *Shirt*) with a pair of ordinary slippers on. But, at last at the earnest request of the Governor, he had to put on native official dress, (i. e. *trousers*, *Chapkan*, *Choga* and *pagri*) for a few days, when calling at Belvedere. He felt ill at ease with this unaccustomed dress, and one day, said to his friend,—‘Sir, if you will excuse me, this is my last visit. This dress puts me to great discomfort.’ Halliday replied,—‘If this be your only objection, I exempt you from

the obligation of putting on this dress. You are at liberty to come here in any dress, you choose.'

In the educational despatch of 1854, the authorities in England had sanctioned several *lakhs* of rupees for making provisions for the dissemination of education among the Indian public. In accordance with the purport of this despatch, Vidyasagar, as Special Inspector of Schools, opened a great number of model schools in the four districts under him. In the interpretation of the purport of this despatch, he had some difference of opinion with his immediate superior, Mr. Young, who directed him not to open any more schools. This was the origin of the subsequent great conflagration, which burnt down poor Vidyasagar's hut. In spite of his superior's interdictions, Vidyasagar opened fresh schools, which gave Young cause to be displeased with his subordinate. Both referred the matter to Halliday, who requested Vidyasagar to postpone the opening of new schools, and referred the matter to the authorities at home. They decided in favour of Vidyasagar, who now began to start new schools with renewed energy. Young felt himself humiliated, and began to cherish ungenerous and unfavourable feelings against his black subordinate, and looked out for opportunities to crush the poor fellow.

In the meantime, there was a change of ministry at home, which caused a change of the educational policy in this country. The authorities in

England were now in favour of curtailing the educational expenditure. Young now found an opportunity of giving vent to his pent up spite and rage. At the verbal request of Halliday, Vidyasagar had opened a number of girl-schools in the interior of the districts under him. The bills for these schools had accumulated for nearly a year, as Young had declined to pass them until a reply to Halliday's reference to England came. But the change of educational policy, in the meantime, gave him a fitting occasion to reject the bills altogether, as Vidyasagar had no official authority to open such schools. Vidyasagar referred the matter to Halliday, who advised him to sue him (Halliday) in court for the money. But Vidyasagar was too generous to bring a law suit against any one, especially against his friend, Halliday. He had no other alternative left now, than to pay the whole amount out of his own pocket, which put him into great embarrassments. It was for this, that Vidyasagar asked Mr. Young for permission to continue in his post for a few days after the acceptance of his resignation by Government had been communicated to him, as will be seen here-after.

The Lieutenant Governor saw the difficulties of Vidyasagar, and requested him to try to conciliate Young and to work in harmony with him. No doubt, Vidyasagar made attempts in that direction, but the haughty young civilian would listen to no conciliation. In this respect Mr. Young had the co-

operation of some other European officers, who had also found cause to be dissatisfied with Vidyasagar, and were equally anxious to stifle the spirited black native.

The reader is aware that the Híndu and the Sanskrit Colleges were housed in the same building. There were two spare rooms in the upper floor, quite unoccupied, which belonged to the Hindu College. When English was introduced into the Sanskrit College, these two rooms were required by Vidyasagar for English classes. He asked Young for them, but he was told to see Mr. J. Sutcliffe, the Principal of the Hindu College on the subject. This Vidyasagar declined, as he had already some altercation with Sutcliffe on the matter. But Young grew importunate, and, at last, imperative. But Vidyasagar was not the man to yield, and he left the presence of his superior in disgust.

Some say, that there arose another serious cause of Vidyasagar's dislike for his superior. As Inspector of Schools, Vidyasagar had to submit periodical inspection reports of the schools, he visited. In these reports he gave facts and figures as they were actually found by him. On one occasion, Young requested him to alter his reports in such a way as would show them to advantage. But the honest Vidyasagar flatly denied it, saying that he could not misrepresent facts, and that he ~~would rather~~ resign, than act in a dishonourable way. At this Young was highly inflamed, and

resolved to teach his black subordinate a sound lesson.

Vidyasagar plainly saw that, after all, it was quite impossible for him to work under such a superior. He now sought for opportunities for an early removal. With this object he addressed the following letter to his great friend and patron, Halliday :—

“ Calcutta, Sanskrit College,
—May 1857.

“ SIR,

“ When I had the honour to wait on you on Saturday last and solicited your permission to make a few suggestions regarding the appointment of an Inspector for South Bengal, you were pleased to direct me to submit a written memorandum upon the subject. I have accordingly availed myself of the permission and beg respectfully to suggest that if you should feel inclined to transfer me to that post, the appointment of my successor in the Sanskrit College may be made in consultation with me, as from an intimate personal knowledge of the several parties from whom the selection may be made, I think I will be best able to recommend the most proper person for the place. If however it should be thought inexpedient to place the division under my charge on account of the Government English colleges and schools in it, I would earnestly solicit that at least the districts in which there are model schools, *viz*, Hooghly,

Midnapur, Burdwan and Nuddea may be placed under me, the colleges and schools being without inconvenience in charge of the person who may be appointed Inspector of the Division.

"I have so often troubled you with the subjects connected with the Vernacular Education that I really feel ashamed to intrude any further on your valuable time.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,
(Sd). "Iswar Chandra Sarma.

"To the Hon'ble F. J. Halliday."

The following was the reply which he received from the Lieutenant Governor on the subject :—

'Darjeeling

"27th May, 1857.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"You will have seen that before the receipt of your letter I had nominated Mr. Lodge to the vacant Inspectorship.

"It was at first offered to Lieutenant Lees who is in Europe, but he has refused it. I shall hope soon to see you, as I am on my way to Calcutta, and it will give me much pleasure to talk to you again on the subjects which interest us both,

"Yours sincerely

(Sd). "Fred. Jas. Halliday.

"To Pundit Iswar Chandra Sarma, Calcutta."

In the meantime, Vidyasagar's relations with

his young superior grew more straitened every day. Mr. Young's treatment of him became unbearable, and he resolved to sever his connection with Young altogether. He, therefore, thought proper to intimate his intention to his immediate superior in time. He wrote as follows : —

"Calcutta, Sanskrit College,
"29th Augt. 1857.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"As you are about to leave town for 3 months, I consider this a fitting occasion to intimate to you that I have made up my mind to retire from the public service in a short time. The reasons which have induced me to come to this determination are more of a private than of a public nature, and I therefore refrain from mentioning them.

"The new arrangements for the Sanskrit College have not yet been fully developed and as I am desirous of completing them which will occupy two or three months more, I wish to continue in my present office until the end of December next, when I shall tender my resignation in due form.

"My object in addressing you now is that you may have ample time to consider the arrangements that you may deem most desirable for supplying my place in the Education Department.

"I remain

"Yours truly

(Sd.) "ISVAR CHANDRA SARMA.

"To W. Gordon Young Esq,

"Director of Public Instruction."

At the same time, he wrote a letter to the Lieutenant Governor, intimating his determination of early retirement. The letter ran as follows :—

“ Calcutta, Sanskrit College,

“ 31st. Augt. 1857.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Sometime ago while talking on the subject of education you were pleased to ask me for a memo. on the state of Vernacular Education in Bengal under the present system of management and I agreed at the time, though with reluctance, to submit it. On subsequent consideration however, I feel the task a very delicate one in as much as the required memo, cannot but reflect on the actions of my brother-officers * and others. I therefore earnestly beg to be pardoned for not submitting the memo. as I had promised.

“ I may here be permitted to state that I have made up my mind to retire from the public service from January next and that I have intimated my intention to Mr. Young in a demi-official note of which I venture to enclose a copy for your information also.

“ I remain, My dear Sir,

“ With every sentiment of respect and esteem,

“ Yours most faithfully,

(Sd). “ISVAR CHANDRA SARMA.

“ TO THE HON'BLE F. J. HALLIDAY.”

* As Inspector of Schools, he had, at that time, in the four districts under him, four Deputy Inspectors of schools,—Harinath Bandyopadhyay, Madhav Chandra Gosvami, Tarasankar Bhattacharyya, and Dinabandhu Nyayratna.

In reply to the above, he received the following note from his patron and well-wisher, Halliday :—

“ 31st Aug. 1857.

“ MY DEAR PUNDIT,

“ I am really *very sorry* to hear of your intention.

“ Come and see me on Thursday and tell me why it is that you have come to this determination.

“ Yours sincerely

“(Sd). FRED. JAS. HALLIDAY.

“ TO PUNDIT ISVAR CHANDRA SARMA ”

To say the truth, the Lieutenant Governor was astounded at the news, for he had no knowledge or idea that matters had come to such a crisis. He knew that Vidyasagar had a violent collision with his immediate superior, and had, therefore, advised him all along to make peace with Young, and to work with him in harmony and secure his amity. Vidyasagar called on the Lieutenant Governor as desired, when after much strenuous efforts and persuasions, Halliday induced him not to take such a hasty step at once, but to see and wait for a favourable turn of the gale, that might save his wreckage. Vidyasagar promised, and waited for nearly a year, but the arrogant young civilian was not amenable to reason. Every day, he grew more and more imperative and insolent, and Vidyasagar's independent spirit revolted at the repeated ill-treatments he received at his superior's hands.

In the meantime, Young found another opportunity of giving vent to his spite against Vidyasagar. The readers of the history of India must be aware, that the Sepoy Mutiny broke out at Barrackpore in the beginning of the year 1857, and it was quelled without much effort. But, in a short time, the Sepoys in the different parts of the country rose in arms, and whole India was in great commotion during the months of March, April, May, and June. The residents of Calcutta, both native and European, passed anxious days and nights. No one dared leave his house for fear of life. European soldiers were posted to guard the city day and night. Reinforcements were brought in from other places, and the Sanskrit College building was required to quarter them. There was no time to lose, and Vidyasagar made over the building to the Military, without previously obtaining permission of his superiors. The College had to be closed for a few days. Subsequently when Vidyasagar wrote to Young asking for his permission to hold the college somewhere else, the Director called on him for an explanation as to why he had closed the College and made over the premises to the Military without his permission. Vidyasagar said that he had done so for the safety of the State, and that he had had no self-interest in it. Young, of course, dared not bring the matter to the notice of the higher authorities, for Vidyasagar had done nothing wrong, but the haughty civilian fancied, he had

been slighted by a native, and tried to humiliate Vidyasagar by other means.

At last, on the 5th August, 1858, he communicated to the Government of Bengal, through his superior, his final decision of retirement from public service. We crave indulgence to quote below the letter at length :—

“TO W. GORDON YOUNG Esq.,
Director of Public Instruction.

“SIR,

“The unceasing mental exertion required by the discharge of my public duties has now so seriously affected my general health, as to compel me to tender my resignation of the Education service to the Honorable the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.

“2. I feel that I can no longer devote the assiduous attention to my duties which their due performance necessitates. I need repose, and in justice to the public interests, as well as to my own comforts and happiness, can only secure that repose by retiring into private life.

“3. The moment my health is restored, it is my intention to devote my time and attention to the composition and compilation of useful works in the Vernacular language of Bengal. Thus, although my direct official connection with the education and enlightenment of my countrymen will have ceased, I venture humbly to hope that my remaining years will still be devoted to the advancement of a great and sacred cause in which my deep and earnest interest can only close with my life.

"4. Among the minor causes that have led to my taking so serious a step, are the absence of all further prospects of advancement and the want of that immediate personal sympathy with the present system of education, which every conscientious servant of the Department, should possess.

"5. With regard to the former, I can occupy my time more profitably and with infinitely less strain upon mind and body, than in my present position. It would be idle to deny that such considerations must have weight with one who has not yet been able to make any permanent provision for his family and who fears that failing health will prevent his doing so, if he delays longer the severance of his connection with the arduous and onerous duties that belong to the offices he holds.

"6. With respect to the other, I feel that I have no right to obtrude my views and opinions upon the Government; yet I could not conceal from those I serve, the fact that my heart is not in my work, and that thereby my efficiency is, and must be, impaired. More I am unwilling to say, less I could not express, with the maintenance of the honesty of purpose which I deem to be an essential quality of a conscientious public servant.

"7. I retire with the conscious gratification that I have always labored earnestly to discharge my duties to the best of my humble ability and I trust that I shall not be deemed presumptuous in tendering my most sincere and heartfelt acknowledg-

ments for the unvarying kindness, indulgence and consideration, which I have always experienced at the hands of the Government.

"I have the honour to be

"Sir,

"Your most obedient servant

(Sd.) ISVARA CHANDRA SARMA.

"The Sanskrit College

"5th August 1858."

To this letter Mr. Young replied as follows :—

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Is it the case that you desire to make some alteration in your letter dated 5th of last month? If so perhaps you had better look in here some day soon and you can either do as you wish in that way or take back the letter and send another (corrected) in its place. But whatever is done should be done on an early day. I shall be here on Saturday and again on Tuesday.

"As I understood from you on Saturday that you did not wish to press your application for leave, I have not sent it on to Government."

"9th Sept. 58.

"Yours very truly,

(Sd.) "W. GORDON YOUNG.

After this, Vidyasagar had some conversation with his friend, Halliday, who tried his best to persuade him to withdraw his resignation letter. Halliday's idea was that the step taken by his friend was rather hasty and indiscreet, for which he would have to regret hereafter, in as much

as it was not as easy to obtain a post worth 500 Rupees a month, as to lose it. But Vidyasagar was firmly resolute, and he said to his friend that he had advanced too far, and that it was then too late to recede. At last, Halliday requested him to make some alterations in those portions of his resignation letter, in which he had expressed his dissatisfaction with the system of the educational administration. From this last conversation, Vidyasagar understood, though wrongly, that Halliday objected to the retention of the passages on his own account. He was unwilling to alter any portion of his resignation letter, and he, therefore, addressed a letter to Halliday, which is quoted below :—

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“After mature deliberation I find that I cannot either with consistency or propriety omit the parts of my letter which appear objectionable to you. It is true that ill-health is one of the principal causes which have induced me to resign. But I cannot conscientiously say that that is the *sole* cause. If it were so, I could have applied for a long leave and renovated my health. I had often represented to you, that I frequently felt it disagreeable and inconvenient to serve Government under existing circumstances and that I considered the present system upon which the Department of Vernacular Education was conducted, was a mere waste of money. You are aware that

I often met with discouragement in my way. I saw besides no prospects of advancement and more than once I felt my just claims passed over. Thus I hope you will be pleased to admit that I had reasonable grounds of complaint : but I would nevertheless have continued in my present post for sometime longer, if I were not forced to take the step I have taken by prolonged ill-health, which has made me unfit for my responsible duties, and when the above considerations had such a considerable share in the decision to which I have come, their omission in my letter would certainly have made me liable to the charge of disingenuousness. For the same reasons, I feel it very difficult to alter it now.

Further the contents of my letter, since it left my hands, have become known to a great many people and there is as much chance of the fact of the alteration becoming equally known, in which case I shall not only be lowered in the estimation of my friends, but of the public generally.

* * * *

Nothing can exceed the deep regret which I have felt since I have heard from you, that the passage in question may possibly put you to some inconvenience ; but words cannot express my feelings of distress when I think that unwillingly I should have given you the least cause for trouble and inconvenience. I should certainly have felt it a great relief if circumstances had permitted me

to retract with any degree of consistency ; but I humbly hope that you will be pleased to admit after a due consideration of circumstances I have explained at length, in what an awkward position I have been placed and how delicate and difficult it is for me now to make any alteration in my letter.

With much deference and respect and with many apologies for troubling you in a matter so purely personal to myself.

"I remain,

"15th Sep. 1858.

"Yours most faithfully,

(Sd.) ISVARA CHANDRA SARMA,

"To The Hon'ble F. J. Halliday."

But Halliday had not objected to the portion on his own account, but for his friend's sake, and he explained his views in the following letter which he wrote to Vidyasagar on the subject :—

"15th Sep. 1858,

DEAR SIR,

"I have received your letter of this day's date. You are mistaken in supposing that the retention of the paragraph to which you allude in your letter of resignation is likely to put me to any inconvenience. To me it is indifferent whether the paragraph be retained or not.

"I mentioned that I thought it possible you might be asked to explain the cause of your dissatisfaction with the administration of the department and as you expressed an insuperable objec-

tion to do this in a public form I suggested that it might be better to omit what you were unwilling to account for and merely allude to your illness which though not the *sole* was certainly a sufficient reason for resignation.

“You ask me to admit that you have had reasonable grounds of complaint. I am quite unable to admit this as to what is now assigned as your grievance—namely (1) that you thought the present system of Vernacular Education a waste of money, (2) that you often met with discouragement and (3) that your just claims to promotion have been passed over.

“It will be sufficient to say that I quite differ with you as to the last point and as to the second can see nothing in which you have ever been discouraged by me but the contrary, as to the first point it is a mere matter of opinion and moreover cannot relate to the special system of Vernacular Education with which only you had to do.

“I remain

“Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

(Sd.) “FRED. JAS. HALLIDAY.

“To Pundit Isvara Chandra Sarma.

Vidyasagar was happy that he had not even unwillingly and unintentionally put his friend into any inconvenience, and he expressed his

thankful satisfaction in the following letter which he addressed to his friend on the 18th September, 1858 : —

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I am very glad to learn from your note that the retention of the para in my letter of resignation therein alluded to, will, in no way, put you to any inconvenience. As far as I can remember I was led to believe from the tenor of our conversation of the other day that the para might occasion such inconvenience, and were it not for that idea, I would never have alluded to it, in my letter of the 15th instant. I feel now, however, a great weight removed from my mind.

“There is only one point upon which I would wish to say a few words. I regret I did not sufficiently explain it in my last. I never for a moment meant to say that I was ever discouraged by *you*. On the contrary, I am fully sensible of the encouragement which I often received from you, and I think I have given vent to my feelings on this point at the conclusion of my letter of resignation. In referring to the discouragement I met with, I meant to say, that obstruction, I often met with, in my way to remove which I was frequently obliged to trouble you. You were always pleased to lend an attentive ear to my representations and very often those obstacles were removed by your kind interference. I always felt it very disagreeable to my feelings thus fre-

quently to trouble you. But it was merely from absolute necessity that I did so.

"I would not again have troubled you, if I did not think it my duty to offer an explanation upon so delicate a point concerning myself.

" 18th Sept. 58.

" I remain

" With great respect and esteem

" Yours most faithfully

(Sd.) " ISVARA CHANDRA SARMA.

"To the Hon'ble F. J. Halliday."

Vidyasagar's heart was now light and his mind was at ease; and, on the 20th September, he found time to reply to Gordon Young's letter of the 9th September, quoted above. He said as follows :—

" Monday, 20th Sept. 58.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" After a mature deliberation I find that I cannot consistently make any alteration in my letter of resignation.

" Hoping to be excused for the delay in replying to your note.

" I remain

" Yours truly

Sd, "ISVARA CHANDRA SARMA.

" To W. Gordon Young Esq.

" Director, Public Instruction."

Vidyasagar had now done everything, and he awaited the acceptance of his resignation by Government. Ultimately, the Government of Bengal,

by their letter No 1566, dated the 25th September, 1858, communicated to the Director of Public Instruction their acceptance of Vidyasagar's resignation, and Mr. Young forwarded an extract from the said letter to Vidyasagar. To satisfy the curiosity of the reader, we give below the extract forwarded :—

“Extract from a letter No. 1566, dated 25th September 1858 from the Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Director of Public Instruction.

“I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 2097, dated the 18th ultimo, with its enclosure, and in reply to state that the Lieutenant Governor is pleased upon your recommendation to accept the resignation tendered by Pundit Isvara Chandra Sarma, Principal of the Sanskrit College and Special Inspector of Schools. It is to be regretted that the Pundit should have thought fit to make his retirement somewhat ungraciously, especially as he can have no fair reason for dissatisfaction. You will, however, be good enough to inform him, that he carries with him the acknowledgments of the Government for his long and zealous service in the cause of Native Education.

“ True Extract

Sd. “W. GORDON YOUNG

“ Director of Public Instruction

“ To Pundit Isvar Chandra Sarma

“ Principal, Sanskrit College.”

We have already said, that Vidyasagar had opened many female schools in different parts of the districts under him, and that he had submitted bills for those schools, but that they were lying accumulated in the office of the Director of Public Instruction, pending the final orders of the Supreme Government. Vidyasagar, therefore, on receipt of the communication of the acceptance of his resignation by the Bengal Government, wrote to Young, asking permission to be allowed to continue in his post until the final decision of the Supreme Government came. But the haughty, young civilian, determined to crush his foe at the earliest convenience, denied him this indulgence as will appear from the two letters that passed between the superior and the subordinate, quoted below :—

(I)

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ I received your letter No. 2461 yesterday noon communicating the acceptance of my resignation. * * *

“ I am already in a very disagreeable position for not having yet been able to pay the Pundits of the Female schools, and I am afraid that I will be more so, as soon as I leave my post. And though it is very desirable, in consideration of the present state of my health, that I should cease from work as soon as possible, yet I would wish on the above account to defer making over charge,

if you see no particular objection, till the decision of Government on my application for the payment of the bill of the Female Schools is ascertained.

" 5th. Oct. 1858. "Yours very truly
Sd. " ISWAR CHANDRA SARMA,
" Thursday morning.

" To W. G. Young Esq.
" Director of Public Instruction."

(2)

" MY DEAR SIR,

" As various arrangements have been made and orders issued in regard to the charge of the College, Normal School, Vernacular Schools &c., which it would be very inconvenient now to cancel, and especially as it is uncertain within what time the Supreme Government may issue final orders in the matter of Female Schools, I do not think it will be expedient on public grounds to defer carrying out the new arrangements any longer. Had your note of the 5th been written a week or two ago I dare say your request could have been complied with, but now I think it is too late.

" I trust the matter of the Female Schools will be dealt with justly and generously by the Supreme Government and that before long you will be relieved from your present awkward position in regard to these schools.

" I remain,
" Yours truly

(Sd) " W. GORDON YOUNG,
" To Pundit Isvar Chandra Sarma."

Everything was now complete, and, in the month of November, 1858, Vidyasagar retired from the paid public service for good. He felt himself at ease to have been able to break loose the trammels of servitude, and breathe the pure, free air of liberty. Most of his friends and relations deeply commiserated him at his loss of an appointment of such high emoluments, but he was never for a moment dejected, or lost his usual cheerfulness of heart. It is said that one of his friends, who was also an Inspector of Schools, had remonstrated with him on the indiscreetness of the step he was going to take. This was what he said on the occasion :—‘Vidyasagar, you are going to take an unwise step. A post of 500 rupees is not easily obtainable, particularly for a Bengali-knowing Pandit like you. When you resign, what do you intend doing, and how will you manage to defray such heavy expenses?’ Vidyasagar smiled, and said,—‘My dear friend, what you say is true. I know that my post is valuable, but mind, nothing is more valuable in this world than self-respect. As to my expenses, what did I do when I threw up my office of the Assistant Secretary to the Sanskrit College? I am better off now. I have some income from my publications.’

Not only his friends and relations, but even some of the high Government officials felt a sincere commiseration for Vidyasagar. Among these, Sir Cecil Beadon, one of the Chief Secre-

taries to the Government of India, may be named foremost. He cherished sentiments of respectful regard and esteem for Vidyasagar, and had an implicit faith in him. To prove this, we will narrate an incident which happened some time before Vidyasagar's retirement. The reader is aware that shortly after Act XV of 1856 (Hindu Widow Marriage Act) had been passed, and it had become a Law for the country, whole India and even England were in a state of great commotion and anxiety on account of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. Some say that the Widow Marriage Act was one of the incentive causes of the rebellion. Be that as it might, this is not the place to enter into a discussion upon that point. After the mutiny had been quelled and the rebels subdued, the Queen of England (Victoria) issued a Proclamation. When this Proclamation came into the hands of the Government of India, it had to be translated into the different vernacular languages of the country. Beadon intrusted Vidyasagar with its Bengali translation. On this subject he wrote a letter to Vidyasagar on the 22nd October, 1858, to the following effect—I wish you to translate the Proclamation into Bengali. It would be better, if you could look in here to-morrow at 11 A. M. It is quite irregular to send out papers, or I would have sent them to you. Do not let any body know that you are charged with this translation.' Is this not a clear proof of Beadon's trust in Vidyasagar?

The Hon'ble C. E. Buckland, in his 'Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors' says :—"In January 1851 he" (Pundit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar) "was appointed Principal of that" (Sanskrit) "College and introduced various reforms in the educational course and management of that Institution. In 1855 he was appointed special Inspector of Schools for the Districts of Hooghly, Burdwan, Midnapore and Nadia in addition to his duties as Principal, on a consolidated salary of Rs. 500 a month, and helped in establishing a number of model vernacular schools at a cost of Rs. 50 a month each, and also a number of girls' schools. It was in connection with these latter that he came into conflict with the Director of Public Instruction and threw up the appointments under Government in 1858. But for some years after he continued to be an unofficial adviser of Government, being consulted by successive Lieutenant Governors. * * * As a Government Officer he worked with remarkable zeal and intelligence and the Sanskrit College was, under his guidance, made an Anglo-Sanskrit Institution, English studies being introduced with a view to modernize the ideas of the students and render them fit for public service."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SANSKRIT PRESS DEPOSITORY.

Vidyasagar's retirement from public service was productive of incalculable good to the country. He had so long been chained down by the fetters of thralldom. As a lion when confined in a cage can not display its powers, so Vidyasagar had been incapacitated by his servitude from unfolding his abilities to their full extent. He now discovered fresh fields of action. He found ample opportunities to do a good turn both to his country-men and to himself. In his resignation letter he had stated, that although his direct official connection with the education and enlightenment of his countrymen would cease with his retirement, yet he would devote his remaining days to the advancement of the sacred cause in which his deep and earnest interest could only close with his life. He now applied himself in right earnest to the fulfilment of that sacred promise.

When Vidyasagar resigned his appointments under Government, his friend, Sir James Colville, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court at Calcutta, advised him to pass the Law examination and enrol himself as a pleader of the Sadar Adalat. He had, from his early years, a great aversion for the legal profession, and therefore, expressed his unwillingness to follow the advice of the Chief Justice. Yet

when Colville repeatedly goaded him to it, he visited for a few days his friend, Dwarka Nath Mitter, one of the best pleaders of the said Court, to have an inkling of the manners of the legal professionals. But from what he witnessed on those days, his aversion for the bar waxed ten-fold, and he gave up that forced project once for all.

Shortly after his retirement from public service he had to face a most heart-rending calamity in the death of his dear grand-mamma (father's mother). According to the custom of the Hindus she had been brought living to the shores of the Bhagirathi (the river Hugli) at the Salkea Ghat, where she lived for 20 days, and then breathed her last in the bed of the holy river. * These 20 days she had lived simply on the sacred water of the Bhagirathi. Her Sraddha ceremonies made a large hole in Vidyasagar's purse. His Widow Marriage movement had turned most of the inhabitants of his native place to be his enemies. They now found an opportunity to be revenged upon him. They tried their best to dissuade the Pandits and the Brahmans of the locality from joining the ceremonies and eating in his house. But Vidyasagar had won a great reputation from his universal philanthropy, and had done immense good to his countrymen in different forms. The reader

* The Hindus believe that if one dies in the bed of the holy river, Bhagirathi, one is taken to the Vishnu Loka (the abode of Vishnu i. e. heaven).

has already been told that he had established a free English School, a night school, a girl-school, and a charitable dispensary at his native village, Birsingha. He had provided for board and lodging of upwards of 60 school boys, sons of Brahmans and Pandits, who were residents of the neighbouring villages. He was always eager to help and succour the distrest. Whenever anybody was in danger and in need of help, and sought for Vidyasagar's assistance, he would run at all risks to rescue the man, without at all considering whether he belonged to the high, middle, or low station of life, or whether he was a friend or foe. Besides the establishment of the charitable institutions in his own village, he had contributed largely to the opening of schools and other useful institutions in the different villages of the neighbourhood. He had secured employments to many young men of the locality. In short, he had endeared himself to all classes of people. Most of his neighbours were under deep obligations to him. How could then they be so ungrateful and impudent as to boycott him from Society and refuse to eat in his house for the only offence that he was the father of the Widow Marriage agitation and had associated himself with those who had formed such alliance? He had given no member of his family in such marriage. Many Pandits, other Brahmans, and lower class people, numbering in all nearly three thousand, feasted in his house for two days ;

Paka Phalahar (Bread fried in Ghee with sweet-meats of different kinds) was given on the first day, and rice on the second day.

Vidyasagar also spent a good sum of money on the occasion of her *Sapindana* (first annual Sraddha). We have no means of ascertaining exactly his religious faith, but this much has been known for certain that he did not observe the forms and rites of modern Hinduism. He was never seen to tell *Mantras* or to worship a Hindu god or goddess. But he, nevertheless, never objected to the members of his family following their own beliefs or acting up to the rites of their respective faiths. On the contrary, he rather encouraged them and helped them in the performance of those rites, and he was often heard to say that it was improper to throw obstacles in the way of one's acting up to one's faith.

Vidyasagar was very deeply afflicted at the death of his beloved grandmother, who bore a most tender affection for him. We have seen with what haste she ran down to Calcutta on the occasion of her dear grandchild's illness and attended his sick-bed with watchful care. In his childhood whenever Vidyasagar was refractory or naughty (as he usually was at that time) and any of his parents wanted to chastise him, he fled for protection to his grand-mamma, who never, in her life, upbraided him for even a grave offence. Vidyasagar too was fondly devoted to her, and felt a

great filial veneration for her. Even when he was a young man and had entered into service, the grand-parent and the grand-child reciprocated the same feelings of affectionate attachment. It is no wonder, therefore, that he should be so sincerely grieved at the loss of such a dear, old grandmother.

The reader is aware that Vidyasagar had established in Calcutta a printing press, called the Sanskrit Press. He had also started, in connection with this Press, the Sanskrit Press Depository, where he kept for sale all the books that were printed in his Press. By degrees this Depository was converted to a regular Book-shop, where not only his own publications but those of other authors also were deposited for sale. On his retirement from service, he had to depend for his maintenance mainly on the income from the Press and the Depository. It is needless to say that in this business he had to employ a number of men, who thus found means of their livelihood. When he freed himself from the bonds of thralldom, and found leisure to look into its affairs, he was highly dissatisfied, with the working and conduct of his chief officer. The accounts were not kept properly, and everything was in disorder. He, therefore, requested his friend, Raj Krishna, to supervise the business of the Depository. Raj Krishna was, at this time, employed as Head-Assistant in the Fort William College on a monthly

salary of 80 rupees, as the reader is already aware. He took six months' leave of absence, and engaged himself in superintending the management of the Depository. These six months he applied himself closely and diligently in examining and clearing the accounts, and after much efforts succeeded in so regulating method and order in every respect, that the business soon prospered, and a glance at the accounts would at once show the state of affairs. Vidyasagar's father was so pleased with Raj Krishna's management that he requested the latter to resign his office in the Fort William College and employ himself permanently as Superintendent of the Depository. Vidyasagar also urged him to it. Accordingly Raj Krishna was permanently appointed as Manager of the Sanskrit Press Depository on a pay of 150 rupees a month. The Depository soon rose to be a very prosperous and profitable business. But Vidyasagar was by nature excessively charitable, and the income from this business could not meet all the demands of his charity. As a matter of consequence, he had to meet them by loans, and slowly his embarrassments grew so heavy, that he was ultimately obliged to dispose of this profitable business, of which hereafter.

We will try to notice here, in passing, one or two instances of Vidyasagar's gratefulness and benevolence, and the ungratefulness of the world. The reader has already had some inkling of Vidyasagar's

and Raj Krishna's intimate friendly attachment to each other. The former often ate and slept in the house of the latter, whose mother loved Vidyasagar as dearly as if he was her own son. The other members of Raj Krishna's family, both male and female, looked upon him as if he was one of them. He also reciprocated the same feelings towards them. Raj Krishna had a little girl, who was named Prabhabati. Vidyasagar loved this girl exceedingly. Her babblings were a source of great delight to him. He was so much grieved at the untimely death of this little child of three years, that he gave up food and sleep for some time, and at last wrote a booklet, *Prabhabati-Sambhashana*, full of laments for her. Its language is very heart-rending and beautifully attractive.

It was not, therefore, very strange that a man of Vidyasagar's stamp should look to Raj Krishna's welfare, and employ him in his own business on a handsome remuneration.

Vidyasagar was so benevolent that he secured appointments to many persons quite unconnected, or only very distantly connected, with him. But unfortunately, some of these men, who through Vidyasagar's exertions had risen to high posts, behaved towards him most ungratefully.

On one occasion, there was a post vacant under a certain Babu (we shall not mention his name for decency's sake), who was at this time a high official of Government, but had originally secured the serv-

ice through Vidyasagar's exertions. A candidate for the vacant situation came to Vidyasagar for a recommendation to this high official. Armed with Vidyasagar's recommendation, the candidate waited upon the Babu at his residence. The Babu was, at that time, reclining upon a sofa, enjoying his hookah and chatting with some of his friends. The candidate handed over to him Vidyasagar's letter. The Babu read it, and smiled. On his friends enquiring the cause of his smile, the Babu replied that Vidyasagar had opened a business of securing situations for others. The candidate was thunder-struck to hear the Babu, and left the place in utter disgust.

Shortly after this, there were five vacancies in a Government office under Babu Priya Nath Datta of Bagbagar, who was the Head Assistant of the department. The aforesaid candidate again came to Vidyasagar for a recommendatory letter to Priya Nath. Vidyasagar did not know Priya Nath personally, and he, therefore, declined to give him the letter. But, at the urgent importunities of the man, he very reluctantly gave him a note of recommendation. The authorities had directed Priya Nath to fill up the vacancies by an examination of the candidates. He, therefore, requested Vidyasagar's man to appear at the examination. The man stood seventh. There were only five vacancies. Priya Nath was in great peril. He then devised a plan. He reported to his superiors that two more hands

were required for the efficient working of his office, and thus provided the man with one of the newly created posts. When Vidyasagar heard this, he was greatly amazed at Priya Nath's noble conduct. He expressed himself thus:—'How wonderful is this world ! He who was benefited by me, slighted my recommendation ; but one, who was quite unknown to me, has been eager to comply with my request.' With this, he at once ran to Bagbazar, and made an acquaintance of the noble Priya Nath.

On another occasion, a situation fell vacant under a European. A man came to Vidyasagar for a recommendation. But he was not known to the European, and, therefore, declined. He was then told that a friend of his, whom he had made Editor of a newspaper, was intimately familiar with the European. Vidyasagar called on the Editor, and asked him for a recommendatory letter to his European friend for the man. The Editor plumed himself up and said that he was now Editor of a journal, and that if he should go to recommend others to Europeans for situations, he would be under obligations to them, and in consequence would not be able to review their actions freely. Vidyasagar was startled, and at once left the presence of the mighty Editor. While this conversation was going on, the Head Mate of a European mercantile firm was sitting there, and heard everything. No sooner did Vidyasagar leave the place,

than he followed him to the street, and enquired of him very politely if a post of 20 Rupees would suit his man. He also said that a situation of that value was lying vacant at his disposal, and he was prepared to offer the post to Vidyasagar's man, if it suited him. Vidyasagar smiled, and admired the magnanimity of the Mate. The man was accordingly sent to his office, where he was provided with the situation.

There are plenty of such instances in Vidyasagar's life. Whenever he was told that a certain person had condemned his conduct, he would at once say,—‘Why should that man go to abuse me? I have never done him a good turn!’ Vidyasagar was often heard to declare that whoever had been benefited by him the most, did him the most evil.

Immediately after his retirement from service, he had given no less than fifteen widows in marriage in different parts of the Hugli district in the course of one year. We have already said that he had to bear all the expenses of these marriages. He had, besides, to provide for the maintenance of the married couples and their families. His income from his business, alluded to before, was not sufficient to meet these demands, which made him contract debts. Though he was thus highly embarrassed, yet he could not economise his outlays. He was always liberal and charitable. He even went so far as to borrow money himself on his

own account to liquidate the debts of other persons. He was, no doubt, a very wise and prudent man, but the overflows of his charitable disposition found the uppermost place in his heart and drove away his wisdom and prudence, whenever an occasion presented itself. May be, he thought that these debts contracted solely for benevolent and charitable purposes must find their own means of liquidation. In fact, his debts had amounted to nearly 50,000 rupees, but he lived long enough to be able to clear them off before his death.

About this time, Gokulchand and Govinchand Basu, two brothers, of Bainchi, came to Vidyasagar, and said that Nilkamal Banarji intended distressing their homestead-land with premises for debts, and prayed for his assistance. Vidyasagar immediately paid 1,000 rupees to Nilkamal, and released the property of the Basu brothers. Subsequently, when Raj Krishna resigned his office of the Manager of the Sanskrit Press Depository, Vidyasagar appointed Gokulchand Basu to the vacant post on a monthly pay of 50 Rupees.

Some time after this, the premises of one Syama Charan Banarji were about to be put to auction sale for debts. Syama Charan supplicated Vidyasagar for help, who at once paid off his debts of 500 rupees and released his property.

We will notice here, in passing, an incident of his noble liberality, that happened some time after this. Baidya Nath Chaudhury, a respectable

Zemindar of Radhanagar, a place not very far from Birsingha, had hypothecated his estate to Babu Rama Prasad Ray, son of the illustrious Ram Mohan Ray, on a loan of 50,000 rupees. After his death, his son had also taken from the same creditor another loan of 25,000 rupees. The debt thus amounted to 75,000 rupees. His son, Siva Narayan Chaudhuri went to Rama Prasad to make some arrangements for clearing the debt by instalments, and died quite suddenly of Apoplexy in the creditor's office. After this, his two sons came to Rama Prasad and implored mercy, but he was inexorable. At last, they with their mother and aunt earnestly solicited Vidyasagar for help. His tender heart was moved at their tears, and he promised to aid them. He tried in various places for the money, but Rama Prasad having previously prohibited other money-lenders, no one ventured to lend so much money. Rama Prasad was one of the best pleaders of the Sadar Adalat and he had an eager desire to grasp the mortgaged estate. Vidyasagar travelled for six months continually in different places and spent nearly 2,000 rupees of his own to procure the loan. At last, with great difficulty, he borrowed 50,000 rupees of Babu Kali Das Ghosh, a relation of Raja Pratap Chandra Sinha, and a further sum of 50,000 rupees from another money-lender. But when this one *lakh* was offered to Rama Prasad, he refused to receive the money. Vidyasagar then placed the matter in the

hands of Swinhoe & Co., Solicitors, who settled the affair and cleared off the debt, thus releasing the property of an ancient respectable family. All the country admired Vidyasagar's noble, disinterested exertions. But, unfortunately, for want of proper management, the estate failed to prosper, and the debt grew heavier. At last, the property was sold at auction, and the widows of Siva Narayan Chaudhuri and his brother were in great distress. Vidyasagar settled on each of them a monthly allowance of 30 rupees. Shortly after this, one Kasi Nath Ghosh of Monpur sued them for 800 rupees. Vidyasagar settled the debt on 150 rupees, which he paid out of his own pocket, thus relieving the poor widows of their embarrassments.

Even after the legislation of the remarriage of Hindu widows, several means were devised by Vidyasagar's friends to keep the movement alive. With this view, Umes Chandra Mitra, brother of the Hon'ble Sir Ramces Chandra Mitra, one of the late native Justices of the Calcutta High Court, composed a drama, titled *Bidhava-Bibaha Natak*. The first performance of this play was opened to the public in the beginning of 1859. Keshub Chunder Sen, one of the greatest orators of Bengal, was intrusted with the management of the stage, and some of his friends and co-adjutors, such as Narendra Nath Sen, Krishna Vihari Sen, Protap Chunder Mozoomdar, and others played the different parts.

Vidyasagar was always averse to dramatic performances. He had only once seen theatricals performed in the premises of the Paikpara Raj family at their urgent solicitations. Some time after, Babu Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great Bengali drama-writer and actor of the present day, compiled a play with the title *Sitar Banabas*, and dedicated it to Vidyasagar. At the first performance of this play, Girish Chandra requested Vidyasagar to be present, but he did not like to go there. But he was present at the theatricals of the *Bidhava-Bibaha Nataka* more than once. It would be better to quote what P. C. Mazoomdar, the author of "The Life and Teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen," says on this point :—

"In the splendid structure at Chitpore Road, to which the Brahmo School was removed in 1859, Keshub found a somewhat unexpected occupation. He was entrusted with the management of an institution very different from the Brahmo School. It was a dramatic club to put on the stage *Bidhava-Bibaha Natak* (widow marriage drama), written with the object of reforming the cruel custom of the forced celibacy of young Hindu Widows. * * *

Since the inauguration of the widow marriage reform in 1856, Keshub, though then a very young man, wished well to the cause, and did what he could to contribute to its success. He therefore cheerfully accepted the management of the Widow Marriage Drama. * * *

The plot of the drama was the miserable life

of a Hindu widow shut up in the zenana who, in her solitary friendless condition, formed an attachment to a young neighbour, by whom she was led to a course of sin. The concluding scenes depicted her sufferings, her suicide, her confessions, with appeals to all patriotic men to put an end to the cruel celibacy of Hindu widows. The performance was first opened to the public in the beginning of 1859, and produced a sensation in Calcutta, which those who witnessed it, can never forget. The representatives of the highest classes of Hindu society were present. The pioneer and father of the widow-marriage movement, Pundit Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar came more than once, and tender-hearted as he is, was moved to floods of tears. In fact there was scarcely a dry eye in the great audience. Undoubtedly the most wholesome effect was produced. Keshub, as stage manager, was warmly complimented on his energy and intelligence, and we, his friends, as amateur actors, who had done our best, also received our humble share of praise."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE HINDOO PATRIOT

It was Vidyasagar's firm conviction that English education would be productive of highly beneficial results for this country. He had, therefore, made his best efforts to inaugurate English into

the curriculum of the Sanskrit College, and established a free school at his own native village. Even after his retirement from the educational service, he did not give up his project, but founded schools in different parts of the country.

It was at the instance, and through the untiring exertions of Vidyasagar, that an Anglo-Sanskrit School was established at Kandi in Murshidabad, the native home of the Paikpara Raj family, the birth-place of Raja Pratap Chandra Sinha. Of course, the school was founded at the sole cost of the Rajas, but Vidyasagar was the chief mover. He was for some time Honorary Superintendent of the school. At this time, he made an intimate acquaintance of Raja Pratap. The Raj family had once got a great help and benefit from Vidyasagar in other respects. The natural affability and amiability of Vidyasagar's character was so attractive, that his image and goodness were sure to be engraved in the heart of every body he came in contact with.

About this time, he first met at Kandi, after a long separation, Kshetramani Dasi, daughter of Jagaddurlabh Singha, who had formerly given Vidyasagar and his father shelter. Kshetramani had been married to Lal Mohan Ghosh, a nephew (sister's son) of a member of the Kandi Raj family. Unforeseen circumstances had reduced her to a state of indigence. The sight of her after a long period of separation and the tale of her distress

moved his tender heart, and tears flowed in torrents from his eyes. He settled on her a monthly allowance of ten rupees.

As Vidyasagar was a possessor of merits himself, so he was a true appreciator of merits in others. He showed his appreciative faculties in the selection of an Editor for the "Hindoo Patriot," one of the ablest native-conducted English newspapers of the day. Haris Chandra Mukharji, the renowned editor and proprietor of the paper, had died at 9 A.M. of the 14 the June, 1861, and its office was removed, on the 25th July of the same year, to Calcutta from Bhowanipore, where it had all along been located, from the day of its birth, in the premises of the late editor and proprietor. Babu Kali Prasanna Sinha purchased the paper at 5,000 rupees and managed it at a loss for some time. But he soon saw the difficulty, and made over its charge to Vidyasagar. Krishto Das Pal was, at this time, employed as a clerk in the office of the British Indian Association. Vidyasagar intrusted him with the editorial charge of the Hindoo Patriot. Krishto Das Pal was made not only its editor, but its proprietor also. Krishto Das had not till then acquired any name as a writer. No one could form an idea that he would afterwards become such a great writer. As a matter of consequence, Vidyasagar's nomination of such a person to the responsible post startled all his friends and acquaintances. But soon they

found out their mistake, and highly complimented the talented Vidyasagar on his very able selection.

The Hon'ble 'C. E. Buckland, in his Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors,' says ;—"When Haris Chandra Mukherjee, the founder of the Hindu Patriot, died on the 14th June 1861, its new proprietor Babu Kali Prasanna Sinha, after managing it at a loss for some time, made it over to Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, who invited Kristo Das Pal to take the editorial charge in 1861, and subsequently transferred the proprietorship in July 1862 to a body of Trustees. They made over the management to Kristo Das, so that from 1861 to the time of his death, he was in charge, and raised the paper to a position of influence and pecuniary prosperity."

His appreciation of merits in others manifested itself also in the selection of another Editor for the *Soma Prakasa*, a Bengali weekly. Vidyasagar had started the paper, some two years before his retirement from paid public service, solely with the view of providing maintenance for a man quite unconnected with him. One day, a Brahman, by name Sarada Prasad Ganguli, came to him, and with tearful eyes, besought him for protection and provision of some means of livelihood. Sarada Prasad had been a student of the Sanskrit College, and had won scholarships for proficiency in both Sanskrit and English, but had, most unfortunately, lost

his hearing. Vidyasagar was quite moved at his misfortune, and started the *Soma-Prakasa* with Sarada Prasad for its publisher, solely for the latter's benefit.

Some time after this, Sarada Prasad was, at the instance of Vidyasagar, appointed Librarian to the Maharaja of Burdwan and Assistant to the Maharaja's translation of the Mahabharat. Maharaja Mahatabchand Bahadur of Burdwan felt a great fond regard and esteem for Vidyasagar. They had met first in 1847, when Vidyasagar had gone to Burdwan in company with Babu Ram Gopal Ghosh, a most celebrated orator of the time, and Raja Satya Saran Ghoshal of Bhukailas to visit the famous city. Vidyasagar had not at that time accepted the articles of food presented by the Maharaja, but boarded with a friend of his. When the Maharaja was apprised of this, he sent for Vidyasagar. He was highly delighted at the latter's conversation, and considered himself fortunate in having been able to make his acquaintance. At the time of farewell, the Maharaja offered him a present of 500 rupees in cash and a pair of *Shawl*. But Vidyasagar declined the offer, and said :—'It is not my practice to accept presents. My pay from the Sanskrit College is sufficient for my maintenance. Such presents might be given to professors of *Tols* to greater advantage.' The Maharaja was quite amazed at Vidyasagar's self-denial. Henceforth

he looked upon the young pundit with utmost veneration. After this, whenever Vidyasagar visited Burdwan, the Maharaja received him most cordially and treated him with much respect. He bore so much fond regard for the venerable pundit, that on one occasion, he voluntarily offered the latter his native village, Birsingha, as a *Taluk*, but Vidyasagar declined this offer too, saying that he would accept the *Taluk*, when his means would permit him to let lands to the tenants free of rent.

It was this Maharaja Mahatabchand Bahadur, who had backed Vidyasagar in his widow-marriage movement, and had been one of the subscribers to the petition presented to the Government of India, as the under-quoted letter will show :—

“My dear sir,

“You will no doubt be glad to hear that his Highness the Maharaja of Burdwan has promised his assistance to the furtherance of the sacred cause of the marriage of Hindu widows. * * * It is really a matter for congratulation, that the first man of Bengal is going to take up the cause.

* * *

He entertains such enlightened views that we have every reason to hope for substantial assistance from him. The Maharaja is not a hasty man, nor does he consent to be led by others, but always thinks for himself and forms his opinions of things after mature deliberation. Now that his Highness is convinced of the goodness of the cause, I have

no doubt that he will be its staunch friend and champion.

(Sd.) "ISVAR CHANDRA SARMA.
"TO THE HON'BLE J. P. GRANT."

To revert. When the *Soma-Prakasa* was first started, Vidyasagar used to write most of its articles. Madan Mohan Tarkalankar also contributed some articles now and then. The paper was issued every Monday, whence its name. By and by, Vidyasagar found it difficult to issue the paper regularly and punctually every week on the appointed day. He could not make time to attend to it with proper care. He was often heard to declare that he was very short of time and the regular publication of the weekly newspaper was harder than another's service. He was, therefore, on the look-out for a competent editor, and he set his eyes on Dvaraka Nath Vidyabhushan, whom he charged with the edition of the paper. Vidyabhushan was made not only editor, but also proprietor of the *Soma-Prakasa*.

The system, under which newspapers are conducted now-a-days, was first introduced into vernacular journalism by Vidyabhushan. He soon made his paper successful, which reflected great credit on Vidyasagar for his judicious selection. The Bengali papers started prior to the *Soma Prakasa* discussed mostly social and religious matters. Political subjects appeared in them few and far between, and even then they were not dealt with

so gravely and elegantly by these papers as by the *Soma Prakasa*. In respect of language too, it was a higher model for the others. In spite of their many defects, those journals must be complimented upon for their attempts at the development of the Bengali language. It cannot but be admitted that the modern form of Bengali prose originated with these newspapers. We will, therefore, try to notice briefly the principal Bengali newspapers, that were born before the birth of the *Soma Prakasa*.

The general impression is that the Christian missionaries of Serampore were the pioneers of Bengali journalism. But in fact, this notion is mistaken. The missionaries issued their 'Samachara Darpana' in 1817. But before that, Pandit Gangadhar Bhattacharyya had started, in the city of Calcutta, his 'Bengali Gazette' in 1815. So this was the first newspaper in Bengali. In 1820 appeared the 'Sangbada Kaumudi,' edited by Bhavani Charan Banarji, with the help of Raja Ram Mohan Ray and Babu Tarachand Datta. But subsequently when the Raja began writing in it articles against the practice of *Sati*, Bhavani Charan cut off his connection with the paper. In the next year, he started his "Samachara Chandrika," a weekly, which was afterwards made a daily paper, and ultimately incorporated with the 'Dainika' of the Bangabasi office. Then followed the 'Timira-Nasaka,' also a weekly, edited by Krishna Mohan Das of Mirzapore. This paper lived for a few short

years only. After it, appeared the 'Banga Duta,' under the joint management of Raja Ram Mohan Ray and Babus Devendra Nath and Prasanna Kumar Tagores. In the beginning of 1831, Babu Jogendra Mohan Tagore of Pathureaghata started the "Sangbada Prabhakara" under the editorship of Isvar Chandra Gupta. With the death of the starter in a few years, his paper also lost its life. Isvar Chandra then became editor of the "Sangbada Ratnabali," but in a short time, he gave it over. He again revived the "Sangbada Prabhakara" in 1836. It was then made tri-weekly ; and in 1839, it was made a daily paper. About the time that this paper was renewed, or a little before it, appeared "Purna Chandrodaya." In the first year, it appeared on every full-moon day, whence its name. In the next year it was made a weekly, and in a few more years, it was also converted to a daily paper. There was also another newspaper, titled the "Sangbada Mrityunjaya." It had one great peculiarity. Everything in the paper, from the advertisements down to the news, appeared in poetry. None of these papers had before been conducted so ably as the *Soma-Pra-kasa*. It excelled all its predecessors in every respect.

To resume our narrative : on the 13th January 1860, Vidyasagar republished, in pamphlet forms, those portions of his Bengali version of the *Mahabharata*, which had already appeared in the *Tattva*

Bodhini Patrika. The publication being incomplete, it did not bring him much profits, though the language is very nice.

On the 12th April, 1861, appeared his *Sitar Vanavas* (i. e. The Banishment of Sita), a Bengali version of Bhavabhuti's "Uttara-Charita," but it differs from the original in many respects. Though the original is one of the best dramas in Sanskrit, Vidyasagar has not dramatised his book. The original is not a pure tragedy, because the Sanskrit Rhetoric does not permit composition of tragic dramas, but Vidyasagar has made his book purely tragical. Besides these, there are some minor differences too numerous to notice. But the language of the book is very elegant, chaste, refined, and attractive. It is an excellent model for writers of Bengali prose. Vidyasagar wrote the book in four days. Pressure of business would afford him no leisure in the day-time to write. He applied himself to its composition in the morning from 2-30 to 10 O'clock. He could not make even so much time as to revise it.

We will again relate here, in passing, one or two incidents displaying his affability, amiability, generosity and physical strength. The reader may be vexed with us for repeated digressions, but there is no help, and we crave earnestly the reader's indulgence.

On his retirement from the service of the Sanskrit College, when he was free, he visited his

native village, Birsingha, oftener than before, and frequented the houses of his neighbours, enquiring after their affairs as previously. Each time he took with him 500 to 600 rupees in coins and cloth to the value of 400 to 500 rupees, which he freely distributed to the poor and helpless. He always gave to the beggars, supplicants, and expectants more than they had expected. He received his visitors cordially and entertained them most generously. He never sent any body away displeased ; it was his nature to do his best to please and oblige every body.

On one occasion, when he was at his native place, a man came to him from Patul, the abode of his mother's maternal uncle. The man saluted him, and said ; - 'Do you know me ? We were fellow-pupils of the same *Pathsala*. You may recollect, how many times I saved you from the hands of the Guru Mahasay (preceptor).' Vidyasagar at once recognised him, and said ; - 'O yes, you are Raghav ?' The man's name was Raghav Ray, and he belonged to the Bagdi caste, one of the lowest classes in Bengal. Raghav looked displeased, and shut his ears with his fingers. Some body whispered in to Vidyasagar's ears that the man was rather crazed, and considered himself the god Krishna Ray of Bagri. He also said that Raghav did not eat food cooked by other Bagdis or persons of any other caste lower than Brahmans. Vidyasagar now understood the whole affair. He at once

stood up and clasped Raghav in his arms, saying,— ‘You are Krishna Ray.’ Raghav’s delight now knew no bounds. He took his seat at Vidyasagar’s feet, and the two friends of early years fell to talking of reminiscences of their childhood.

On another occasion, as he was sitting in the verandah of his house at Birsingha, one Matuk Ghosh, a Sadgop by caste, called on him. He welcomed the visitor with his usual affability, and asked him to get up on the verandah and to sit by him. The man hesitated. Vidyasagar at once caught hold of his two arms, and lifted him upon the verandah from below it, and made him sit by himself. His physical powers were equal to his powers of the mind.

Some time in 1862, when he was at Birsingha, one day, as he sat to dinner, an aged lady and a young girl appeared before him and began to cry, Vidyasagar was told that the lady was wife of his Guru Mahasay, Kalikanta, and the girl was his daughter. We have already said that Kalikanta was a Kulin Brahman and had taken to him many wives. Vidyasagar was also told that Kalikanta did not care to provide for the maintenance of this wife and daughter. He at once sent for Kalikanta, whom he had made one of the teachers of his school. When the latter arrived, he requested him to provide for the maintenance of the two females, who were no other than his own wife and daughter, adding, at the same time, that if he did

so, his monthly allowance would be raised. Kalikanta agreed to pay them four rupees every month. He at once paid 12 rupees in advance for the first quarter, and promised to make all subsequent payments quarterly in advance. Vidyasagar himself provided for their clothes. But some time afterwards, Kalikanta drove the two away from his house. When Vidyasagar came to know of it, he was moved to tears, and made provisions for their support.

Raja Isvar Chandra Sinha of the Paikpara Raj family breathed his last on the 26th February, 1861. Vidyasagar was present by the death-bed, and was deeply grieved at the sad catastrophe. The Raja was a great appreciator of Vidyasagar's merits and works, and always sympathised with, and aided, all his movements.

Vidyasagar was a sincere friend of the poor and the rich alike. He never expected a single pice from any one, but spent his all in succouring the distress. Even when a wealthy man was in danger and besought his help, he would spend his last pice in relieving the man. If he happened not to have sufficient funds at the time in his own purse, he would obtain money on loans, and rescue him from the danger. On the other hand, if he saw that any of his friends or relations failed in their duties or tried to damage his respect, he would at once sever all ties of friendship and affection, and cut off his connection with them, even if they were

millionaires. It was for some such similar reason, that he on a subsequent date banished his only son from his heart, of which hereafter.

In 1862, he had to meet with another mournful catastrophe in the death of his once dear friend, Rama Prasad Ray, the youngest son of the illustrious Raja Ram Mohan Ray. Rama Prasad was the ablest pleader of the Sudder Adalat of the day. He was the first native of Bengal, who was nominated to be a justice of the said Hon'ble Court. He had received the appointment letter, but before he could take his seat on the bench, he was suddenly ill and died. A few years before this sad event, Vidyasagar had a great difference with Rama Prasad in connection with the remarriage of Hindu widows. It is said, that on the occasion of the marriage of Sris Chandra Vidyaratna, who was the first to come forward to take a widow to his wife, some influential, wealthy persons had subscribed to an agreement to be present at the wedding festivities and promised to contribute largely to the expenses to be incurred on widow marriages. But most of these subscribers did not keep their word. A few days before the marriage, Vidyasagar called on his friend, Rama Prasad, and reminded him of his agreement and promise. The latter replied:—'No doubt, I am in favour of the cause ; you may count on my contribution too. But suppose, I do not join the wedding party. Is there any harm ?' Vidyasagar was quite disgusted at his friend's conduct.

He was so much offended that for some time he could not utter a single word. After a long silence he pointed to the portrait of Raja Ram Mohan Ray hanging on the walls, and said ;— ‘Throw it away at once.’ With this, he left the place in great haste. After this incident, Vidyasagar never more entered into his friend’s house. The two very rarely met. But the mournful news of Rama Prasad Ray’s death moved him to a flood of tears. Both were men of great abilities and talents, and naturally had a sincere attraction of their hearts.

In 1862, appeared his *Vyakarana Kaumudi*, *Part IV*., which was his last Sanskrit Grammatical work dressed in Bengali.

In the course of this year, there took place several marriages of Hindu widows in different parts of the country. Of these, one was celebrated in Calcutta. The bride and bridegroom both belonged to the highest class of Hindus. All these marriages were celebrated at Vidyasagar’s expense. He had now no other income than what accrued from his Press and publications. We have already said that it was quite inadequate to meet his heavy outlays. Consequently he had to obtain money on loans. Besides, he borrowed 10,000 rupees on Michael M. Datta’s account, which the latter being unable to repay, Vidyasagar paid off out of his own pocket, which will be noticed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XX.

MICHAEL M. DATTA.

In the year 1862, Michael Madhusudana Datta went out to England to study the Law and become a Barrister-at-law. Before he left India he had let his patrimony to a well-reputed Vakil of Calcutta. It had been arranged, at the time, that the pleader should pay the consideration money by instalments to a certain Raja of the Kayastha caste, who, as go-between, would remit the amounts to Madhusudana at stated intervals. The Raja sent him only a few instalments, and then stopped remittance. Not only did he stop remittance, but even would not take the trouble to reply to Michael's letters. Madhusudana was now in the greatest misery in a foreign land. He was not alone there. His wife and children had accompanied him. His painful situation rose to such a climax, that he was on the threshold of gaol, when he suddenly recollected an Indian friend, to whom he addressed a long, pitiful letter, as the last resource, imploring his assistance. Dear reader, can you guess who was the Indian friend, to whom he appealed for rescue? He was no other than the great philanthropic Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar. We cannot forbear quoting some portions of the long letter :—

"Versailles — France.
* * *

2nd June 1864,

"My dear Sir,

"You will be startled, I am sure, grieved to learn, that I am at this moment the wreck of the strong and hearty man who bade you adieu two years ago with a bounding heart, and that this calamity has been brought upon me by the cruel and inexplicable conduct of men, one of whom at least I felt strongly persuaded, was my friend and well-wisher. * * *

"I am going to a French jail, and my poor wife and children must seek shelter in a charitable institution though I have fairly 4,000 Rupees due to me in India.

"You are the only friend who can rescue me from the painful position to which I have been brought, and in this you must go to work with that grand energy which is the companion of your genius and manliness of heart. Not a day is to be lost.

"Shall I apologise for the trouble I am giving you? I do not think so; for I know you well enough to believe with all my heart that you would not allow a friend and countryman to perish miserably.

"Kindly address in France, as above, for there is no earthly chance of my leaving this country

before God, and you under God, help me to do so.

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Ever yours faithfully

(Sd.) "MICHAEL M. DUTT."

The letter moved tender-hearted Vidyasagar so much, that tears flowed from his eyes in incessant torrents. He was at that time highly embarrassed himself. He had not a single pice in his hand. But he was determined, at all hazards, to rescue Madhusudana. He resorted to his usual means. He raised a loan, and remitted 1500 rupees to France. If he had not helped Madhusudana by this remittance, there is no knowing what would have befallen the greatest poet of Bengal. Most probably he would have to rot in a "French jail," and there perish miserably, as will be evident from his next letter quoted below :—

"Versailles—France

* * *

"2nd September, 1864.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"On the morning of last Sunday, the 28th Ultimo, as I was seated in my little study, my poor wife came to me with tears in her eyes, and said—"the children want to go to the Fare, and I have only 3 Francs. Why do those people in India treat us this way?" I said—"The mail will be in to-day, and I am sure to receive news, for the man to whom I have appealed has the genius and

wisdom of an ancient sage, the energy of an Englishman, and the heart of a Bengali mother." I was right ; an hour afterwards I received your letter and the 1500 Rupees you have sent me. How shall I thank you, my noble, my illustrious, my great friend ? You have saved me. * *

"Am I not right in thinking that you have the heart of a Bengali mother ?

"Yours &c.,

(Sd.) "MICHAEL M. DUTT."

Vidyasagar now found a fresh field to display his natural benevolence, though at great personal sacrifice. This was not the only remittance he sent to Madhusudana. By several successive instalments he had to remit 6,000 Rupees to Europe on Michael's account. All this heavy amount he had to raise by loans. On such occasions, his practice was to borrow Government Promissory Notes of his friends, which he pledged to money-lenders and received loans to the amounts required, and then to repay them at convenience and release the hypothecated Notes. He informed Madhusudana of his own difficulties, but, at the same time, helped him with liberal remittances. The next letter that he received from his friend in Europe was this :—

Versailles-France

* * *

18th December 1864.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" Your kind letter with a draft for 2490 Francs,

reached me in due course and in very good time too ; for we were without money and eagerly looking out to hear from you. I need scarcely tell you how sincerely I thank you. But your letter has pained me no little. * * *

(Sd) "MICHAEL M. DUTT.

We should not like to trouble the reader with his numerous letters from Europe to Vidyasagar, which are all full of outbursts of his grateful heart and appeals for fresh remittances. Suffice it to say, that it was solely by the timely kind help of Vidyasagar that he was able to come back to his country as a Barrister-at-law. Endeavours were made by a malicious, mean-minded Indian to throw obstacles in his way, but fortunately he escaped them. He was called to the Bar at the Grey's Inn on the 18th November, 1866. How his heart bounded with delight, he expressed in a letter to his dear friend, Vidyasagar. We crave indulgence to quote some portions of the long letter :—

" London

" 7 Bedford Place

" RUSSEL SQUARE W. C.

19th November, 1866.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" I am sure you will be highly delighted to hear that I was called to the Bar last night by the Society of Grey's Inn and that I am at last a Barrister-at-law. All this I owe to God and to

you under God, and I assure you I shall ever think of you to be my greatest benefactor and truest friend. But for you what might have become of me.

* * *

"I propose to leave Europe by the French Steamer which will leave Marsailles on the 19th of January next. I at first thought of going away in December, but as I am about to leave Mrs. D. and my children behind I should like to spend Christmas and New Year's Day with them. I have done with England now and intend going to France soon, for I mean to leave my family there.

* * *

"I dare say my last letter has both surprized and shocked you. It is true that that rascal—has done nothing, but no thanks to his good-will. He was fully determined to write to the Benches of the Grey's Inn, but fortunately for all of us, W. C. Bonnerjee frightened him out of his malevolent intentions. I do not know another Bengali so mean, so low, so unprincipled, so পরিত্রিত কাতর as the dirty villain!

* * *

"If you have sent the money, as I hope you have, I shan't be in Europe to receive your reply to this. I shall very soon have to encounter the perils of a long voyage by sea. You know, my dear Vidyasagar, that I have no friend except yourself. I leave my wife and two infants in this

strange part of the world ; should anything happen to me during the voyage, remember that they will look to you for help, comfort and friendship. I am obliged to leave some debts behind. But I shall write to you by and by as to what you must yet do for me.

“ Monday, 20th November.

“ I went to the Court of Common Bench in Westminster to put my name down in the list of English Barristers.

“ I have no news of importance to give you, So I must hasten to conclude. I have changed the spelling of my name and given it the true Sanskrit form. I am “published” Barrister as Michael Madhusudana Datta, Esquire. You might drop the vulgar form “Dutt.”

“ With grateful thanks and kind wishes,

“ I remain, my dear friend,

“ *Ever* your obliged

(Sd). MICHAEL M. DATTA.

Madhusudana's outbursts of “grateful thanks” did not end in his letters only. A great poet as he was, he poured forth his heart in verse in his *Chaturdasapadi Kavitali*, which is sure to re-awaken, in the minds of the readers of Bengali, feelings of deep veneration and esteem for the universally benevolent Vidyasagar to the end of the world. But it must be said with sentiments of profound regret, that Michael did not afterwards act up to Vidyasagar's advice, and latterly stabbed

the heart of his noblest and greatest benefactor, who had taken so much pains to save him from starvation and bring him back to the country as a Barrister.

Madhusudana returned to Calcutta in February 1867, as penniless as ever. Before his arrival, Vidyasagar had taken for him a nice three-storeyed house, and kept it ready furnished in European style. But Madhusudana, instead of putting up in this house, lodged in Spence Hotel. Vidyasagar called on him, and tried his best to persuade him to remove to the newly furnished house, but failed in his attempts. Michael was now free, and thought within himself that, after all, he was not bound to follow Vidyasagar's advice, and that he was at liberty to act according to his own free will. He thus began to disregard his "truest benefactor" in different ways, but Vidyasagar never minded them. He loved Madhusudana as dearly as if he was his own son. Both of them were great geniuses, and had a sincere attraction for each other.

Madhusudana applied for enrolment at the Calcutta Bar, but he had again many obstacles thrown in his way. His application was about to be rejected, as will be evident from the letter, quoted below, addressed to Vidyasagar by Babu Onoocool Chunder Mookerjee, one of the best pleaders of the time, who subsequently rose to be one of the justices of the High Court at Calcutta. Onoocoul Babu said :—

"April the 8th 1867.

"My dear Sir,

"I am anxious to hear what has become of Mr. Michael, whether the Barister-machinations has (*sic* ?) been successful in depriving the poor man of his gown. I hope not, the Chief Justice will be disposed to be kind to him and may allow him to come in,

* * *

"Yours very sincerely

(Sd.) "O. C. Mookerjee."

Vidyasagar was at this time in Burdwan. Michael ran to him there, and implored his assistance. The former at once came down to Calcutta, and after strenuous efforts, at last, succeeded in getting Madhusudana enrolled as a Barrister of the High Court of Judicature at Fort William (Calcutta). But Michael had never a good practice at the Bar, and that was in consequence of his own irregular habits. His books, no doubt, brought him some small revenue ; but, unfortunately, his income from the two sources were too inadequate to maintain himself and his family, who had already returned to him from Europe. He had acquired most intemperate habits, and was very extravagant. Whenever he wanted money, which was an usual occurrence, he appeared before his "noblest friend and benefactor," and obtained from him loans, which he never cared to repay. Sometimes, when he found that coins were lying in rows before his benevolent friend, he would not take

the trouble to ask him for them, but would stretch out his hands to receive them, and before Vidyasagar could prevent him, he would help himself to a handful and make good his escape. Vidyasagar bore Madhusudan's such acts of wanton mischief and violence with a degree of patience, which was quite unusual with him. He, who could not tolerate the failings of his own children and did not feel difficulty in estranging his only son, easily put up with the outrages of Madhusudana. In fact, he felt a sort of magnetic attraction for the poetic genius of Michael.

After his return to Calcutta, Michael obtained from Vidyasagar 4,000 rupees over and above the 6,000 rupees that had been remitted to him in Europe by his generous friend. But he never repaid a single pice.

The 6,000 rupees which Vidyasagar remitted to Madhusudana in Europe, he had raised by loans from Onoocool Chunder Mookerjee and Sris Chandra Vidyaratna.

Besides, he had borrowed from them various other sums on Michael's account to pay off his other debts, which were very considerable. When Michael returned from Europe, Onoocool Chunder began to make pressing demands for repayment of his money, as will be seen from the following letter, which was addressed by him to Vidyasagar.

"April the 8th 1867.

"MY DEAR SIR,

* * * *

"I am at present much in want of money, pray

oblige me by letting me have the 3,000 Rs. and the interest on 12,000 Rs. mortgage. You are aware that no interest has yet been paid.

"Now that Mr. Michael is here, he ought to settle these affairs without delay. How do you do— I hope well. Believe me

"Yours very sincerely,

(Sd.) "O. C. MOOKERJEE."

Sris Chandra also demanded repayment of his loan in urgent terms. Vidyasagar was in great difficulty. He was himself so short of money, that he could not meet these demands from his own purse. He, therefore, wrote to Madhusudana earnestly soliciting him to make an early arrangement to relieve him from his disagreeable position. He also mentioned in his letter of his ill health, which necessitated his sojourn in the North-West Provinces for restoration of his health, suggesting that unless Madhusudana settled his affairs, he could not avail of the advice of his medical attendants. To this urgent letter Michael replied as follows :—

"I, Spence Hotel.

"MY DEAR VIDYASAGAR,

Your letter, which reached me a few minutes ago, has given me great pain. You know there is scarcely anything in this world which I would hesitate to do for you ; of course you have my full permission to adopt any steps you think proper to relieve yourself of the unpleasant burden.

Srish has written to me offering Rs. 21,000. But don't you think Onookool would advance fresh money enough to pay off that man and hold the property by way of mortgage—usufructuary mortgage—I paying him the difference in the interest ? If we can in this way save the estate let us do so, if not let them go. I wish I could run over and see you. Perhaps I shall do so next Saturday.

“With affectionate regard

* * *

(Sd.) “M. M. DATTA.”

But practically Mudhusudana took no steps to relieve his friend from encumbrance. Sweet, flattering words were all he could give. Far from contributing anything towards the clearance of his previous debts, he would melt Vidyasagar's tender heart with pitiful supplications, and obtain from him fresh loans, as will be evident from the letter quoted below :—

“No. 22, Baniapooker Road

“Entally

“Sunday

“MY DEAR VID,

“I was called away to Howrah in a little case and had no time either to write or call yesterday. Excuse my selfishness, my greatest of Benefactors and noblest of Friends for troubling you with my affairs at a time when you yourself are so poorly ; — but except Him whose name you bear, I have no one to help me ! Now, that most of my cre-

ditors are ready to consult my convenience, hearing your name ; now that I see land ahead offering me protection from the perils of the tempestuous deep, my heart dies within me, when I think that I must lose all this and sink and perish for such a small sum as Rs. 2,000 ! Will you let destruction overtake me, my old friend and protector ? If you see the Rajeeb and with your fervid eloquence rekindle in his heart his old love for me, now bowed down with shame and sorrow, he will not lend you a cold ear. What is a loan of 2,000 Rs. to him ? I have to meet 3 Dears next Tuesday, my landlord won't wait any longer and all my *pretty* creditors are up against me. Two thousand rupees would save me and I could at once remove to a smaller house and begin a most rigid system of economy. I must have this money by to-morrow evening, or mine will be the lot of the fugitive or something still more horrible ! I pray God, that this may sound on your gentle ears like a lay of anguish from a breaking heart !

“ With loving salutation,

“ Ever your grateful

(Sd). “ MICHAEL M. DATTA.”

This was the letter Michael wrote to Vidyasagar on the eve of the return of his family from Europe. The reader may well guess the result of this pathetic appeal. Vidyasagar's benevolent heart would not suffer him to lend a deaf ear to the pitiful cries of an humble suppliant. He

resorted to his usual means of borrowing, and helped the supplicant with the amount prayed for. In the middle of 1868, Sris Chandra began to make urgent demands for repayment of his money and even threatened to bring legal proceedings. Vidyasagar, at last, addressed an appealing letter to Madhusudana on the 7th September, 1868, which is quoted below :—

“MY DEAR DATTA,,

“I have succeeded in persuading a friend of mine to advance rupees 5,000 to enable me to pay off Shrish Chandra who is sure to go to Court in case we fail to clear his account without further delay. The conditions on which my friend is willing to advance money you will find in the enclosed draft. The deed is to be registered. It will therefore be necessary for you to step over to the Registration Office for a few minutes on Wednesday next. Be so kind as to do the needful and save me from the trouble and anroyance, as I feel it exceedingly disagreeable to my feelings to be any longer in connection with the party to pay off whom the new transaction is to take place.

“It will be seen from the following memorandum that to complete the transaction Rs. 141 over the sum of Rs. 5,000 is required. This small amount you will have to pay from your own pocket. Please return the draft by the bearer and oblige,

“Yours sincerely
(Sd.) “I. C. SARMA,

" Principal	...	...	...	4,600
" Interest for 22 months and 7 days	...			510
" Stamp	...	...	...	25
" Registration fee	...	...	...	6
" 7-9-68."				<hr/>

5,141

(Sd). " I. C. SARMA."

But Michael was not the man to pay heed to his noblest friend's advice or request. He did nothing towards repaying his debts. At last, when Sris Chandra grew most pressing and urgent, and when Michael could not be persuaded to do anything, Vidyasagar was obliged to dispose of two-thirds of his "Sanskrit Press" on the 9th August, 1869, to Raj Krishna Banarji and Kali Charan Ghosh in equal shares, at 8,000 rupees, and pay off Sris Chandra. Henceforth he was constrained to cut short heavy money transactions with Madhusudana. Yet he could not help assisting the intemperate and extravagant poet now and then with small amounts as charities, which he never asked him to repay. Consequently Michael was now obliged to look out for loans in other quarters, and was somewhat displeased with his "protector." By degrees his debts grew to such an enormity, that ruin stared him in the face, as will be evident from the following letter addressed to Vidyasagar and the schedule annexed to the letter :—

"SIRE,

"At the urgent request of the Maharaja of Panchakot, I am obliged to start this very night for Purulia. I cannot, therefore, call on you. I hope to call again on Monday next.

"I beg to enclose herewith a schedule of Mr. Datta's debts with the names of the creditors. I most humbly request that with your usual unbounded kindness you will rescue Mr. Datta this time. In fact, without your kind favour, I see no way of his deliverance.

"Your Most Obedient Servant
"10th Asvin, night. (Sd). Kailas Chandra Basu.

"Schedule of Michael M. Datta's debts.

"Trades Association 500, Babu Kali Charan Ghosh 5000, Mathur Kunda of Tollygunge 4000, Govinda Chandra De, Bowbazar 3000, Dwarka Nath Mitter 2500, Pran Krishna Datta, Syambazar 1100, Hari Mohan Bandyopadhyay, Kidderpore 1600, Rajendra Datta Doctor, Chandernagore 200, Kedar Doctor 200, Gopi Krishna Gosvami 1000, Lala, Barabazar 8500, Mr. Gomage 600, Bisva Nath Laha, 100, De & Co. 100, Manbhum 500, Maniraddin 400, Amiran Ayah 200, Isvar Chandra Basu & Co. 3600, Raja of Benares 1500, Matichand Bandyopadhyay 2000, Umes Chandra Basu and another 500, House-rent 390, Servant's wages 700", amounting in all to 38190 rupees.

Kailas Chandra wrote this letter at the earnest request of Michael. But Vidyssagar could

ill afford to pay off this enormously heavy debt of his protege. Some time after this, when the extravagant debtor saw no means of rescue from this "Deep" of debts, he once more appealed to his former "protector" in most pitiful terms. Vidyasagar also once more tried to save his protege, but failed to raise any more loans on Madhusudana's account. At last he addressed the under-quoted letter to Michael :—

"MY DEAR DATTA,

I have tried my best and am sadly convinced that your case is an utterly hopeless one. No exertion of mine or that of anybody else who is not a moneyed man, however strenuous it may be, can save you. It is too late to mend matters by patch-works. I am very unwell and am therefore unable to write more.

"Yours sincerely

"30th Sept. 72 (Sd.) "ISVAR CHANDRA SARMA"

Babu Bihari Lal Sarkar, who has written a very good biography of Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar in Bengali, says : — 'It must not be thought that Michael did not wilfully repay Vidyasagar's debts out of any evil motive. In fact, he was quite unable to pay. The main cause of this inability was his extravagance. Over and above that, he never cared for his practice and earning.' It is said that Vidyasagar forced him to attend the Bar against his will. Otherwise, why should he have to end his days like a pauper in the

Charitable Medical Hospital at Alipore, where he breathed his last at 2 P. M. on Sunday, the 29th June, 1873. Nearly a year or two before his death, he was banished from the bosom of his "noblest friend." This was owing to his own intemperate and outrageous habits, which exceeded the bounds of Vidyasagar's patience. Latterly Michael did not at all behave well towards his protector. In one of his letters Vidyasagar had addressed him *Babu*. Michael refused to receive that letter. Henceforth Vidyasagar had a sort of dislike for the England-returned Indians in general, and tried to keep himself aloof from them.

Before bringing this chapter to its close, we will try to show how intemperate Michael Madhusudana Datta was in his habits and how he took advantage of Vidyasagar's generous liberality, by quoting a letter of his own, addressed to Vidyasagar.

"Judge's Court

"MY DEAR VID :—

"I am going to take with me to yours for प्रसाद (Prasad) my learned co-adjutor Babu Mutty Lal Chowdry. You had be a little charitable and send for a bottle of Sherry.

"Yours affectionately
(Sd.) "MICHAEL M. DATTA."

CHAPTER XXI.

WARDS' INSTITUTION.

This Institution was founded by Government in 1855 or a little prior to that, for the training of the minor heirs of the Princes and Zemindars of Bengal. It was placed under the direct control of the Board of Revenue for the Lower Provinces. Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra was appointed its Director. The Hon'ble C. E. Buckland, in his 'Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors', says,— "In 1855-56 he" (Rajendra Lala Mitra) "was appointed Director of the Ward's Institute in Calcutta ; and some of the Zemindars who were his pupils acknowledge with gratitude the debt they owed to his careful training." In November 1863, Vidyasagar was nominated a visitor of the Institution. On this subject he received the following letter from the Board of Revenue :—

"From

"R. B. CHAPMAN ESQR.

"Secretary to the

"Board of Revenue L. P.

"To

"Pundit ISHWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR

Dated Fort William, the 3rd November 1863.

"Sir,

"With reference to the second paragraph of a letter to your address from the Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal No 981, dated 5th March

last, I am directed by the Board of Revenue to request, that you will have the goodness to undertake to visit the Wards Institution, which is now located in Manicktollah, during the months of March, July, and November in each year.

"2. The remaining months of the year have been distributed among the gentlemen associated with you as visitors of the Institution. The Ex-officio members of the Committee of visitors will not confine their visit to any particular period of the year.

"3. I am to take the opportunity of forwarding to you, a copy of the Rules of the Institution. You will observe (Rule 40) that it is expected that you should visit the Institution at least once during each of the months allotted to you, though it is not in any sense necessary that, you should limit your visits to the months named in this letter.

"I have the honor to be

"Sir,

"Your most obdt. servt.

(Sd.) "R. B. CHAPMAN

"Secretary"

After he had made four or five visits, he submitted to Government the under-quoted memorandum :—

MEMORANDUM

Since my appointment as visitor, I have several times visited the Institution and have been satisfied with the

internal arrangements as far as they have come under my observation. There is one point, however, which appears to me to require a change ; and it is this :—

Under existing arrangements, all the wards assemble in one hall and sit round one table for the purpose of reading. This arrangement struck me as unsatisfactory on the first day of my visit, and the impression has been strengthened by the successive visits which I have since paid to the Institution. The wards are divided into several classes, their studies ranging from the Spelling-Book to the Entrance Course. The classes, being obliged to sit together round one table, necessarily cause serious disturbance to each other ; and those amongst the wards, who are not very attentive, generally neglect their studies. In the mornings, the Director sits in the hall and sees whether the wards have prepared their lessons for their schools. But his presence becomes an additional source of disturbance to the classes, owing to the ingress and egress of people who come to him during that time.

One private tutor assists all the wards in preparing their lessons in the evenings ; but in my humble opinion, *one* teacher is quite inadequate for the purpose. He cannot possibly devote more than a quarter of an hour to each class and render any material assistance to them. As a necessary consequence, the progress and proficiency of the wards are generally not very satisfactory.

To remedy these evils, some arrangements seem to be absolutely necessary ; and I would suggest the following :—

First. Each class should have a separate place and a separate reading table.

Second. Each class should be placed in charge of a separate private tutor.

Third. In the lower classes, the tutors should be made to attend both in the mornings and evenings ; and in the higher classes, their attendance should be required once, either in the mornings or evenings.

My object in suggesting the entertainment of a separate teacher for each class is, to secure the necessary amount of aid to the wards. The present system of education followed in schools is such that, it is impossible for the generality of young pupils to attain proficiency in their studies without proper aid at home ; and this much needed aid can never, as I have already stated, be expected from one individual, who attends so many classes for only one or two hours a day. Extra aid is given to their children by people who can even with difficulty afford it, and it is certainly very desirable that the wards should have that aid to its fullest extent.

If the arrangements, suggested above, are carried out, all causes of disturbance will be removed, negligence in the inattentive materially checked, and far greater progress and proficiency secured in future.

Again, under the proposed arrangements, it will not be necessary for the Director to overlook the daily school-lessons of the wards—a drudgery of which I would relieve him altogether and assign to him the far more agreeable as well as important task of training their minds and giving them instruction on subjects of general interest. Such a task would certainly better suit the talents and ability of the Director which he possesses in a high degree. At present, he does this work to a certain extent and when relieved of the drudgery alluded to ; he will be able to perform it with much greater efficiency.

The primary object in bringing the wards to the Metropolis is, I presume, to educate them and train their minds in a proper style. Every possible endeavour should, in my humble judgment, therefore, be made to secure that object.

“Calcutta,

The 4th April 1864. (Sd.) “ISVAR CHANDRA SARMA.”

On receipt of this Memorandum, the Board of Revenue by its letter No 483 dated the 18th

November, 1864, called on Vidyasagar for a full report on the working of the Wards' Institution. The letter ran as follows :—

No. 483.

From

"R. B. Chapman Esqr.

"Secretary to the

"Board of Revenue

To

"Pundit ISHUR CHUNDER VIDYASAGAR

Dated Fort William, the 18th Nov. 1864.

"Sir,

"The Government of Bengal have requested the Board of Revenue to call upon you for a full report respecting the working of the Wards' Institution at Calcutta for the year 1863-64, on the following heads :—

"2nd. Number of Boys ; Progress ; Course of Instruction ; Physical education ; Health ; Food ; Expenses ; Visitors' Inspection.

"3rd. I am directed to beg the favour of your submitting the required report as early as possible and to request that a similar report be submitted for every succeeding year as soon after the end of May as possible.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your most Obedt Servt.

(Sd.) "R. B. Chapman.

Secretary

Similar letters were also addressed to the

other visitors. It was arranged among the visitors themselves that they should submit a joint report. But subsequently, difference of opinion on some points made Vidyasagar send on his report separately. His report was dated 11th January, 1865, and ran as follows :—

“ To

“ R. B. CHAPMAN ESQRE.

“ SECRETARY TO THE BOARD
“ OF REVENUE.

“ SIR,

“ I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter No. 483 dated the 18th November last, requesting me to furnish a full report respecting the working of the Wards' Institution at Calcutta for the past official year. Before entering upon it, I beg leave to state that it was at first in contemplation to submit a joint report by all the visitors ; but differences of opinion on certain points having arisen among them, I take the liberty to submit a separate report and to apologize for the delay which has taken place in consequence.—

“ NUMBER OF BOYS.

“ There were 12 boys on the Rolls on the 30th April last.

“ PROGRESS. COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.

“ With the exception of two or three, progress made by the pupils was not generally satisfactory, and the course of Instruction requires revision as shall be explained hereafter.

“ PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

“ The arrangements for this branch of education are satisfactory. The Wards went through the prescribed exercises regularly.

"HEALTH.

"To all appearance they kept their health pretty well.

"FOOD.

"The articles of food, as far as they came under my observation, were unexceptionable in character and quality. It was prepared by their own men in separate kitchens.

"EXPENSES.

"The total expenditure of the year amounted to Rs. 31,524-2-10 which yields an average of Rs. 2,627 per head per annum, or Rs. 219 per month. Considering the position of the Wards and the expensive living of Calcutta the average expenditure does not appear to be very high.

"VISITORS' INSPECTION.

"I commenced my inspection from November 1863 under instructions from the Board, and visited this institution five times up to the close of the year. From the commencement, it struck me that the arrangements for the studies of the Wards at home were defective and required reversion. Accordingly I took the liberty to submit a memorandum on the 4th April last, noticing in detail the defects in question, and suggesting such remedies as appeared to me best calculated to correct them. The only change, that has since been introduced, consists in the appointment of an additional private tutor. But I would beg leave humbly to observe that in my subsequent visits the state of things did not appear to me to have materially improved.

"Since submitting the memorandum referred to, I have given the subject my most serious attention, and I take this opportunity to lay my views before the Board for their consideration. It appears to me that all the present arrangements, regarding the Education of the Wards, should undergo thorough revision. Generally the Wards remain at the Institution from 4 to 6 years, and it would certainly be unreasonable to expect that, in so short a

period, they will be able to make any satisfactory progress in their studies, if they are made to attend public schools and go through their prescribed routine course. The course of instruction in those institutions commences with the Alphabet and ends with the University Entrance Standard, and it generally takes 9 years for an ordinary student to go through this course. But a student, who has successfully passed this ordeal, can scarcely be considered to have acquired that amount of information and knowledge of the English language which would prove useful to him in after life. It can therefore be easily imagined how inconsiderable is the progress made by those who do not complete this course, but leave off in the middle. Unfortunately, such has been and shall be the case with the Wards in a great majority of instances, if the present mode of educating them in Public Schools is continued. As however it seems highly desirable that they should leave the Institution with a fair amount of useful knowledge, I would beg leave respectfully to suggest a new arrangement for their education.

- I. That the Institution be turned into a sort of Boarding School instead of being merely the residence of the Wards as at present.
- II. That a separate course of instruction, especially suited to the necessities of the Wards, be framed for them.
- III. That the requisite staff of efficient teachers be entertained for their instruction.

“The advantages of this system over that followed in Public Schools are so self-evident that it would be superfluous in me to enter into any detailed explanation. At school a teacher of a class has to teach at least 30 boys, and notwithstanding his best endeavours, he can scarcely succeed in expounding more than a few lines a day from a class-book. To learn this the Wards have to remain 6

hours at school and to devote two hours in the mornings and two in the evenings at home. It is certain that under the proposed arrangements they will be able to go through the same amount of reading in 2 hours with better success. As a necessary consequence, they will surely attain a much larger amount of useful information and far better knowledge of the language during their short stay and prove more useful members of society in after-life, than they can possibly be expected to do under existing arrangements. But, if those arrangements are continued, and the Wards leave the Institution with the little knowledge that they do at present, it will, I fear, be but a sorry compensation for the trials and inconveniences to which they were put, at a tender age, in the separation from their homes and families.

"I also take the liberty to bring to prominent notice Rule XI of the Rules for the management of the Wards Institution. That rule prescribes that "Corporal punishment shall be resorted to only in aggravated cases." It appears from the Order Book that almost in every month one or more boys have received ratan cuts varying from 4 to 12. The instances, in which they have thus been punished, do not however appear to me to come under the class—"aggravated cases," with the exception perhaps of one which is not sufficiently described. But, irrespective of the *nature* of the offences committed, I would beg leave to observe that corporal punishment should be discarded altogether as a part of the training of the Wards. This punishment is strictly prohibited in all Educational Institutions on account of its baneful influence. Hundreds of pupils are managed in them without the use of the cane ;—its necessity in the Wards Institution is scarcely perceptible. In my humble opinion, such barbarous harsh treatment does by no means become the inmates of that Institution. I have some experience in the training of boys and my firm conviction is that corporal punishment, from

its degrading effects, spoils more than mends the recipients. I would therefore beg leave strongly to recommend that this rule may be rescinded at once.

"There is also another point to which I would beg leave to draw attention. At present, the majority of the Wards occupy rooms in the ground-floor and sleep in them. As long residence in such rooms, in the insalubrious climate of Calcutta, may eventually affect their health, it seems very desirable that measures may be adopted for their accommodation on the first floor, if practicable.

"In conclusion, I beg leave to apologize for intruding on the Board with the above suggestions, which I felt it my duty to lay before them after an anxious and careful consideration of the subject.

"I have &c.,

(Sd.) "ISVAR CHANDRA SARMA."

"11th January 1865."

After the lapse of a few months, Vidyasagar submitted, on the 29th August 1865, a second memorandum setting forth his views on the scheme of bringing the Institution into a successful working order. The memorandum is quoted below :—

MEMORANDUM.

"The object of the Wards Institution is to give the wards a fair amount of education, train them up as useful members of society and turn them out good landlords. But the education they receive is scarcely worth the name, and they generally leave the Institution with a mere smattering of English. Nor can any better results be expected in the existing order of things. To remedy the evils, certain suggestions were made by me in my report of the 11th January

last. I have deliberately reconsidered them, since the formation of the present Committee, and see no reason to change the opinions expressed in that paper. It is my firm conviction that the remodelling of the Institution, on the plan suggested, is the only practicable means to better its condition, and to secure the beneficial results anticipated from the establishment of the Institution.

“Great care should be taken in the selection of the teaching staff, in case it be determined to convert the Institution into a Boarding School. They must be well-educated men, experienced in training up children and youth, and free from fashionable vice. The management and control of the Institution should be vested in the Head Master. Under such arrangements, I feel assured that the prejudices entertained against the Institution, not without reason, would be removed and the confidence of the Public restored. But, if, otherwise, the Institution be maintained on its present footing, I shall not be sorry to see it closed at once.

“The after career of some of the young men, brought up in the Institution, reflects discredit on it. If a comparison were instituted between the retired Wards and other young landlords who were not brought up in the Institution, I believe it will be found that the balance will turn in favor of the latter.

“Removal of the Institution to Krishnaghur, for the present, is by no means safe, on account of the epidemic raging there. The places, to which it can be removed with safety, are either Beerbhoom or Berhampore. But, if the changes suggested be carried out, I would prefer the Institution continuing in Calcutta, in as much as the supervision here would, I think, be more efficient than in the Mofussil. The frequent inspection of the visitors as well as proximity to the controlling authorities, cannot fail to exercise an amount of beneficial influence on the Institution, which will not easily be available in the Mofussil.

"I think it would be highly advantageous to the wards, if their term of minority extended to 21 years instead of 18 years, as at present ; as in that case, they will have longer time for improving themselves, and they will enter upon the possession of their respective estates at an age, when men's characters are formed in a manner. This extension, I believe, will not be unacceptable to the class of Zemindars, as I find that the British Indian Association, sometime ago, moved the Legislature on the subject:

(Sd.) "L. SARMA

"29th August 1865."

Most of the reforms and revisions suggested by Vidyasagar for the improvement of the Wards' Institution were carried into effect, except the prohibition of corporal punishment. Dr. Rajendra Lala raised arguments in favour of the punishment. A Committee was set on foot to investigate into the matter. The Committee approved of Dr. Rajendra Lala's scheme of corporal punishment for the Wards. This was the origin of the difference between the Doctor and Vidyasagar, which by degrees grew so serious as to ultimately induce Vidyasagar to resign his visitorship.

Babu Bihari Lal Sarkar, in his biography of Vidyasagar says :— ' It is not easy to ascertain the true reason why he (Vidyasagar) resigned his visitorship. I tried my best to find it out, but failed. I enquired into the matter of Babu Nanda Krishna Basu, one of the Secretaries to the Board of Revenue ; but he also failed to find it out. So far it has been ascertained that his last visit paid

to the Institution was on the 28th March, 1865, * from which it seems that he must have resigned some time after this date.'

In 1863, a Committee was formed to consider the introduction of Sanskrit into the University curriculum for the several examinations in Arts. Vidyasagar was appointed a member on this Committee. The other members were Messrs. Woodrow and Cowell. The order communicated to Vidyasagar on the subject is quoted below : —

OFFICE MEMORANDUM.

"Dated Fort William, the 29th August 1863.

"The gentlemen whose names are noted in the margin † are appointed a Committee to consider and report on the extent to which it is expedient to introduce the study of Sanskrit in the Collegiate and Zillah Schools with reference to prospective changes in the course laid down by the University for the several Examinations in Arts. Mr.

* "Recordkeeper

"Can you give the last date on which the late Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar paid a visit to the Ward's Institution, Calcutta.

Sd. "N. K. Basu
29-7."

"The last date is 28th March, 1865.

"To Secy.

"N. N. Seal
29-7'

† The names noted in the margin were Messrs. Woodrow and Cowell and Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar.

Woodrow will act as President of the committee and will arrange the place and time of meeting in communication with his colleagues :—

(Sd.) "W. S. ATKINSON

"Director of Public Instruction.

"No. 3041.

"Copy forwarded to Pundit Eshwar Chunder Vidyasagar for information.

"Fort William } (Sd.) "W. S. ATKINSON,
 "The 29th August 1863 } "Director of Public
 Instruction."

— Besides these important works, both private and public, he had to attend to many minor matters. He had almost daily to decide and settle many intricate questions on Hindu Law and politics. On the 16th May, 1864, Mr. Stanforth of Ranchi referred the following question to Vidyasagar for decision :—

"A, a zemindar is an idiot. His tenants give him in marriage, but the Zemindar does not understand at the time what the matter (marriage) is. In course of time, this wife of the Zemindar gives birth to a son. Whether this son can be a lawful heir to the Zemindar?"

On the 22nd June of the same year, Vidyasagar passed the following decision :—

"This son is the lawful heir. Although the Zemindar, at the time of his marriage, does not understand what the matter is, yet such defective

marriage is not invalid in the eyes of the Hindu Law.'

We have already said that Vidygsagar never hesitated to contract debts on his own account to rescue many debtors from the hands of usurers and money-lenders by paying them off. But he never pressed these persons, whom he thus relieved, for repayment of his money. Most of these people took advantage of his cautious reserve, and never repaid their debts to Vidyasagar. Some of them had really no means to pay. In fact, there is no reckoning how many persons (some of them men of means) he thus saved from utter ruin. We will give here a few instances of his such liberality.

(1) Ram Kamal Misra of Radhanagar and Gorachand Datta of Gangadaspur, two persons quite unconnected with Vidyasagar, were indebted to one Tarachand Sarkar to the extent of 500 rupees. Tarachand sued them, and obtained against them a decree for the whole amount. Both the Judgment-debtors were arrested under warrants of the Court. They then came to Vidyasagar, and with tearful eyes, entreated him to save them from jail. Vidyasagar had no money in his purse at that time. He stood surety for the two debtors and borrowed 500 rupees from Rakhal Mitra, a third party, under a bond executed by Ramkamal and Gorachand, and saved them from inevitable, imminent imprisonment. But the two

debtors never more paid visits to Vidyasagar, and he had ultimately to repay, from his own purse, the 500 rupees with interest thereon.

(2) On one occasion, Pandit Jaganmohan Tarkalankar was in great peril for 500 rupees. He tried various means to raise the money, but failed, and at last, prayed to Vidyasagar for deliverance. Vidyasagar resorted to his usual means, borrowed the amount, and paid it to the supplicant. But Tarkalankar also no more visited his protector, who had, consequently, to repay the debt out of his own pocket.

(3) A certain Brahman had contracted a debt of 200 rupees for the maintenance of his family. He could not repay the debt. His creditor was ready to sue him. The Brahman appealed to the benevolent Vidyasagar for help, and the latter made him a free gift of 200 rupees.

Dear reader, we would ask you earnestly to think over Vidyasagar's greatness of heart. He was not a man of wealth. In pecuniary point of view, he was nothing but a common man of the middle station of life. But in liberality he surpassed the richest millionaires. He gave away his charities unostentatiously to whomever prayed to him for assistance without distinction of caste or creed. It was quite against his nature to refuse a supplicant, be he a Hindu, Christian, Mussulman, Jain or Buddhist.

It is said, that Mahamahopadhyay Rakhal

Das Nyayratna of Bhatpara, when he first opened his *Tol*, applied to Vidyasagar for a monthly grant-in-aid for the up-keep of his school. Vidyasagar granted him a monthly stipend of 10 rupees, which Nyayratna received from him for four years. Subsequently when he had sufficient means of his own, he declined to receive the grant any further. Besides this monthly stipend, Vidyasagar helped him in other ways also.

The charities of this benevolent Pandit did not end with the beggars and supplicants. The natural kindness of his heart moved him always to enquire into the affairs of his neighbours, and no sooner did he find any fellow-creature suffering from want and poverty, than he helped the poor sufferer with all his means, and provided for the unfortunate fellow's ease and comfort. Whenever he was out of his house, either on business or airing, he used to take with him a purseful of coins of different denominations, which he always gave away in alms to the indigent, he met on his way. It is said, that on one occasion, as he was returning home late at night, he found by the wayside a harlot loitering in the streets in that dead of night in expectation of some lewd customer. She had not been able to earn anything that evening, and had consequently, nothing to live upon the next day. Vidyasagar gave her some money and advised her to go to rest. On another occasion, he came to learn that a poor Madrasee was living

with his wife and numerous children in a low, damp, dingy, filthy hovel. The unfortunate man had practically no means of subsistence. Vidya-sagar personally visited the man in his hut, and provided for his easy, comfortable living.

One morning, when he was taking an airing walk in company with one of his friends by Cornwallis Square, he saw a Brahman, returning from his Bhagirathi bath, with a most cheerless face and tears trickling down his breast. Vidyasagar asked him the cause of his grief. The Brahman was not at first disposed to answer the question, for he saw that his interrogator was very plainly dressed in a coarse *Dhuti* and *Chadar* and a pair of ordinary slippers (he remembered that Vidya-sagar never dressed himself gaudily), and that he would not be able to do anything for him. Besides, he had heretofore appealed to many millionaires of Calcutta for assistance, but all of them had turned to him a cold ear. He was therefore disinclined to say anything. But when Vidya-sagar insisted on hearing his sad tale, the Brahman said, that he had borrowed some money for his daughter's marriage, but that he had had no means to repay the debt, and the creditor had consequently brought a case against him in the Court of Small Causes. Vidyasagar again asked him what was the date for the hearing of the case ; to which the Brahman replied that the date fixed for the hearing was on the third day

following. By and by Vidyasagar drew out from him his name, residence, the number of his case and other particulars. When the unfortunate man was gone, Vidyasagar requested his friend to go to the Court and make an enquiry. The result of the enquiry showed that the poor Brahman was actually indebted to the amount of 2400 rupees, inclusive of interest. The next day, Vidyasagar deposited the whole amount in the Court in favour of the creditor, and cautioned the officers and pleaders that his name might not transpire in the transaction, and that he would himself pay the reward that the debtor would offer for the donor's name. On the appointed day, the poor Brahman appeared in Court, and was surprised to find that his debt had been cleared off. He was exceedingly delighted at his unexpected deliverance, and poured forth thankful blessings on the unknown benevolent donor. But, at the same time, he was very sorry that his best efforts to discover the name of the noble benefactor completely failed. Was not Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar truly great?

The reader is already aware that Vidyasagar had opened many female schools in different places, but that the bills for those schools had been refused by Mr. Young, the Director of Public Instruction, and that he had to pay off those bills out of his own poor purse. The reader has also been told, that besides these undue payments, he

had to incur large expenses on the marriage of Hindu widows, and on the maintenance of many poor persons who had contracted such alliance. His slender revenue from his business and the sale of his books was never adequate to meet these heavy demands. We have already said that most of them who had promised him liberal contributions forsook him one by one, and that only a few of them, mostly Europeans, helped him now and then. Of the natives, only Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari, of whom mention has been made before, and his younger brother, Raj Kumar Sarvvadhikari, who was then a professor in the Lucknow Canning College, and is at present Editor of the Hindoo Patriot, were faithful to him. To support our statements, we will take the liberty to quote below some correspondence that passed between Vidyasagar and some of his friends.

A

" My dear Pundit,

* * *

" I enclose a cheque for Rs. 1651 on account of my subscription to your Female School fund for April, May, and June, 1863.

" Yours very truly
(Sd.) "C. Beadon."

B.

"Calcutta
"11th October 1863

"THE HON'BLE SIR BURTLE FRERE

MY DEAR SIR,

* * *

"You will no doubt be glad to hear that the

Mufussil Female Schools, to the support of which you so kindly contributed, are progressing satisfactorily. Female education has begun to be gradually appreciated by the people of districts contiguous to Calcutta, and schools are being opened from time to time.

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*

*

"I remain,

"With great respect and esteem,

"Yours sincerely

(Sd.) "Isvar Chandra Sarma"

C

"Darjeeling

"August 17th—1866

"Pundit Isvara Chandra Sarma :—

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I have now the pleasure to enclose a cheque for Rs 33 on account of Sir Cecil Beadon's subscription to the Female Schools for the half-year of 1866. This would have been sent before, but the cheque book was accidentally left behind.

"Believe me,

"Yours very truly

(Sd.) "H. RABAN."

D.

From an Indian friend to Vidyasagar,

"The contribution you speak of, would have been made ere this, were it not for a difference of opinion between myself and brothers who contend by urging that as no practical benefit has hitherto

resulted, as had been expected by the advocates of the cause of widow marriage, further contributions to that end are needless, and though my argument was in favour of perseverance in it for a time when a better result might ensue, it has failed to be of any avail with them. Being thus restricted in the use of my own discretion in the matter and indisposed as I feel to act independently of them, I am really sorry that my further co-operation with you in this respect should cease, and I trust the reasons I have mentioned will plead for my cause."

E.

Vidyasagar's reply to the above.

"As the intimation came too late, I naturally counted upon receiving your donation, and I made arrangements accordingly. I have, in consequence, been placed in a very difficult position."

F.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Dada's letter of the 18th September just reached me. I am glad to hear that first half of the Currency Note for Rs. 100 has reached you. I enclose the second half.

"Dada tells me to send you 15 Rupees every month, as my contribution to the widow marriage fund. If you have no objection, I will send my subscription in advance for six months, this will be more convenient to me than sending it every month. * * * *

"As I shall remain very anxious till I hear from you, kindly let me know of the safe delivery of this letter enclosing the second half of the Currency Note.

"I remain,

"Yours affectionately

(Sd.) "RAJ KUMAR SARBADHIKARY.

It is needless to say that these small donations and subscriptions contributed very little towards liquidation of his heavy debts. Besides these, he had, at this time, to pay 1800 rupees to Maharaja Satis Chandra Ray of Nuddea, as will be evident from the following letter, which the Maharaja wrote to Vidyasagar acknowledging receipt of the amount :--

"MY DEAR VIDYASAGAR MAHASHAYA,

"I have received through my Dewan Kurtic Chunder Roy the eighteen hundred Rupees (Rs 1800) which my late father deposited in your care in his life time and for which I am much obliged. Hoping you are quite well.

"I remain,

"Sincerely yours

(Sd.) "Satish Chunder Roy."

We have already said that Vidyasagar generally borrowed monies from his Indian friends, and sometimes when they happened not to have the required money, he would receive from them their Government Promissory Notes, and raise loans by pledging them. He had borrowed a large amount

by pawning the stock-papers of his friend, Dr. Durga Charan Banarji, and the latter, when he had an urgent necessity for money to clear his own debts, wrote to Vidyasagar asking for return of his Promissory Notes. Among other things Durga Charan said in his letter ;—"You will learn from the same that my debt affair is about to come to a crisis, which does not admit of further delay." Of course, Vidyasagar had no money then to be able to release his friend's Notes, and he replied to his letter to the following effect :—"I have tried my best continually for several days to release your Papers, but have failed to make any means. I do not see any chance of my being able to return your Notes soon. You are well aware that I did not receive your papers on my private account. I took them for the furtherance of widow marriage. I have taken such Papers from some other friends also. I took all these in the hope that I should be easily able to clear the debts, when the advocates of widow marriage would pay their contributions. But unfortunately most of these subscribers have not kept their word. The expenses on this account have been daily increasing, while my income is decreasing. I have consequently been put to a great peril. Like others, you yourself subscribed your name to pay a donation and monthly subscriptions, you have paid only a half of your promised donation. The other half you have not yet paid, and you have withheld your monthly sub-

scription some months since. It has now become very difficult to clear the debts. However, I am trying my best to repay them. If I find no other means, I shall dispose of my every thing, and clear the debts ; there is no doubt about that. But I am deeply sorry that I am unable to return your property at a time when you yourself are in great want. Had I been able to foresee that the people of our country are so mean and worthless, I would never have gone to give widows in marriage. I would have stopped with the passing of the Widow Marriage Act.'

In fact, Vidyasagar was, at this time, too cumbrously embarrassed. He saw no way of deliverance. He had some friends among the higher European officials of Government, of whom Sir Cecil Beadon, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, was his best friend. Beadon clearly saw his difficulties, and one day asked him if he was disposed to re-enter the Public Service. Vidyasagar replied that if he could help, he was not willing to put on again the shackles of thralldom, but that he would think the matter over, and let him know his mind. About a year after this conversation, when he saw that it was almost impossible for him to manage without a fresh source of income, he addressed a letter to his friend, Beadon, on the subject. The letter ran as follows :—

" The Hon'ble Cecil Beadon.

" My Dear Sir,

" A change in circumstances compels me to

trouble you with a request to do something for me, I am in difficulties, and I find it almost impossible for me to put over them without a fresh source of income. About this time in the last year, you were pleased to ask me whether I was willing to re-enter the public service. I think I expressed my unwillingness at the time, but what was then a matter of choice has now become a matter of necessity.

"Trusting to be excused for the trouble

" I remain, &c.

Sd. " Isvar Chandra Sarma."

This was what Beadon wrote to him in reply :—

" My dear Pundit,

"I will bear your wishes in mind. But I do not, at present, see any way in which I could find you suitable employment in the public service.

" Yours truly

Sd. " C. Beadon."

In the mean time his circumstances grew more embarrassing every day, and he began to seriously think of re-entrance into Public Service on some lucrative employment. About three years after his correspondence with the Lieutenant Governor, referred to above, he was informed, though wrongly, that a Professor of Sanskrit was about to be newly appointed in the Presidency College at Calcutta. He then wrote again to Beadon, praying for the appointment. The letter is quoted below :—

" The Hon'ble Sir Cecil Beadon.

" My dear Sir,

" About three years ago when I communicated to you my willingness to re-enter the public service on account of the difficulty I was in, and solicited you to do something for me if practicable, you were pleased to say in reply that you would bear my wishes in mind. Since that time my difficulties have assumed a far more serious aspect, and I am compelled, though most unwillingly, to trouble you again with the request for doing something for me, if practicable.

" In March last, you expressed in the course of conversation a wish for appointing a professor of Sanskrit in the Presidency College. If you still entertain that wish, and if you see no objection to my being selected for the appointment, kindly give it to me. But I must say candidly that notwithstanding the serious nature of the difficulties I am in, my vanity would not permit me to serve if the salary, which European professors of that Institution draw, is not allowed to me ; the grant of such an indulgence would not be an altogether unprecedented one. The native Judge of the High Court can be pointed out as an instance. With every sentiment of respect and esteem.

" Yours Sincerely

Sd. " Isvar Chandra Sarma."

To the above Beadon replied as follows :—

" My dear Pundit,

" I should be glad if I could in any way for-

ward your wishes, but I see a great difficulty in the matter. I am sure the Government of India would not listen to the proposal of founding a Sanskrit Professorship in the Presidency College on so high a salary. But I shall consult Mr. Atkinson on the general question without mentioning your name. * * *

“ Yours truly

Sd. “ C. Beadon.”

Vidyasagar then addressed to Beadon the following letter :—

“The Hon'ble Sir Cecil Beadon.

“MY DEAR SIR,

“When I wrote to you about the Sanskrit Professorship I was under the impression, that the creation of such an appointment had been settled and that the place was entirely in your gift. But as it appears from your favour of the 9th ultimo that there is likely to be great difficulty in the matter, and as it is farthest from my wish to put you to any sort of inconvenience on my personal account, I most gladly withdraw my request. You need not trouble yourself any further on the subject.

“Hoping to be excused for the trouble.

“I remain,

“Yours sincerely

(Sd.) “Isvar Chandra Sarma.”

So here ended his desires and attempts to re-enter the Public Service. He no more thought of

such an employment. That Vidyasagar should be compelled under critical circumstances to seek for an opportunity to re-obtain a service from which he had retired of his own will disregarding the counsels of his friends, is no strange thing. Not a few great men are known to have sought for rescue, though much against their will, under pressure of difficulties. Maharaja Pertab Sing, the greatest hero of Rajputana, when defeated by the army of Akbar, was obliged to wander from hill to hill with his family. Yet he did not submit to the Mussulman Emperor. At last, when he saw one day that his dear children were feeding upon bread of grass seeds, and even that hardly sufficed to appease their hunger, he thought of submitting to Akbar, and accordingly addressed to him a letter intimating his design. But, in fact, his after thoughts prevented him to take that disgraceful step, and he gave up his design of yielding to the Mussulman Emperor. Was there ever a greater patriot and hero than Pertab Sing? When such a great man was compelled by adverse circumstances to determine upon adopting a step so humiliating, there is nothing strange in Vidyasagar's determination to seek for re-entrance into dependent life. However, fortunately for the country, he was baffled in his attempts, for he was destined to be of greater service to his fatherland, as will appear presently.

Vidyasagar had an intimate friendship with

Mr. Dall, an American Missionary. He had been a resident of Boston in the United States of America, and belonged to the Unitarian Church of that city. He was sent out as a missionary to preach Christianity in this country. He established a "Useful Arts School" in the Dhurumtollah Street of Calcutta. In this school, instructions were given to the natives of this country in Music, Fine Arts, and Athletic Exercises, besides English literature. Dall was a kind-hearted, benevolent man like Vidyasagar. He also founded a free School for the education for poor native children. It was his kindness of heart and benevolence that attracted our noble hero to form an acquaintance of him. Whenever Dall wanted pupils or teachers for his schools, he consulted Vidyasagar on the point. Besides this, he also asked for our hero's advice on all important matters connected with the education of the people of this country. In proof of our statement, we will crave indulgence of the reader to quote here two of Dall's letters.

(1)

"Useful Arts School,
"No. 85 Dhurumtolla.
"Jany. 6, 1864.

"MY GOOD FRIEND,

"I truly thank you for your prompt attention to my request. The teacher you send looks like the right man.

"I thank you.

"Sincerely,
(Sd.) "C. H. S. DALL."

(2)

"85, Dhurumtollah,
 "Useful Arts School,
 "Feby. 1st 1864.

MY GOOD FRIEND,

"Many thanks for your sending of this young man to-day. The place he was to have filled happens to be just now occupied by a teacher who seems very attentive. Should the place be vacant I shall send for this young man.

"The upper teacher next to my highest, whom your kind note says may come to-morrow or the next day, and begin on 25 Rs. we look anxiously.

"Call and see us when you can

"and always believe me

"Your friend and co-worker

(Sd.) "C. H. S. DALL."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE METROPOLITAN INSTITUTION.

We take the following from a pamphlet, titled 'Statement of Facts Relating To The Metropolitan Institution :—

"1. In 1859, a school, under the name of the Calcutta Training School, was founded in Sankar Ghose's Lane, in the Northern Division of the

Town of Calcutta, by Babus Thakurdas Chakravarti, Madhabchandra Dhara, Patitpavan Sen, Gangacharan Sen, Jadabchandra Palit and Baishnavadas Adhya alias Baishnavacharan Adhya, all since deceased.

"2. The costs of establishing the school were defrayed by the founders themselves ; but several other Hindu gentlemen rendered substantial aid to the school ; for instance, the Wellington Square Dutt family gave a large number of books for establishing a library in connection with the School, and the late Babu Syamacharan Mallik, who was described as the patron of the school, contributed to the expenses of the school at its inception, which, however, became self-supporting within a short time.

"3. The object which the founders had in view was not to make any profit out of the Institution, but to impart English education to the middle class Hindu youths at a lesser tuition-fee than what was charged in the Government Schools in which religious toleration was enjoined, and Hindus would therefore send their boys to them in preference to the Missionary schools which, though charging a lesser tuition-fee, had the avowed object of preaching Christianity to the Hindu students, and were, on that account, disliked by the Hindus.

"4. The school was at first managed by the founders themselves, but after a few months of its

establishment, they saw Pundit Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar who, as Principal of the Government Sanskrit College and the Inspector of Government female schools, was most experienced in managing schools, and had ample time at his disposal as he had resigned the Government service,—and requested him and Babu Rajkrishna Banerjee to assist them in managing the school ; and on their complying with the request, a Committee of Management was formed consisting of the founders and of the said two gentlemen and a few other additional members, and the said Committee continued to manage the school upto March 1861.

“5. In the said year a difference of opinion sprung up amongst the members of the said Committee with respect to the dismissal of a teacher found guilty of gross misconduct ; and this led to disagreement between the founders, two of whom, namely, Babus Thakurdas Chakravarti and Madhabchandra Dhara did, in consequence, give up their rights to, and cut off their connections with, the said school, and founded a rival school under the name of the Calcutta Training Academy. At that time Babu Madhabchandra Dhara, who was the Treasurer of the Calcutta Training School, had in his hands five or seven hundred Rupees of the School fund, which amount was taken away and appropriated by the said two seceders and impliedly understood as the price or value of their interest in the original school.

"6. After the said disruption, the remaining founders, namely Patitpavan Sen, Gangacharan Sen, and Baishnavadas *alias* Baishnavacharan Adhya, who had other works to do, having found by experience that Pundit Iswarachandra Vidyasagar was highly public spirited and thoroughly disinterested, and was best competent to manage the school, entrusted the management thereof to the said Pundit, and to Raja Pratapchandra Sinha, Ramanath Tagore, Hiralal Sil, Ramgopal Ghosh, and Rai Harachandra Ghosh Bahadur.

"7. In April 1861 the aforesaid gentlemen formed a Committee of Management of which Raja Pratapchandra Sinha was the President and the rest were members, and the Pundit was also the Secretary, and they laid down certain rules regarding the said school and its management,"

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*

*

For convenience' sake we quote below the objects and rules of the School as found in another pamphlet, titled 'Rules of the Calcutta Training School', said to have been published by Vidyasagar in 1862, for distribution to the pupils.

"Committee of Management :

"Raja Pratap Chunder Sing Bahadoor, *President*.

Babu Rama Nath Tagore,

„ Hira Lal Seal,

„ Ram Gopal Ghose,

„ Rai Hara Chunder Ghose

Bahadoor,

Iswara Chunder Vidyasagar, *Member*
and *Secretary*.

Members.

Babu Gangadhar Acherjee, *Assistant Secretary*.

"That the nature and object of this Institution may be better understood, the Committee of Management desire to submit for the information of the public the following Explanatory Statement :—

"It has been found by experience that the great majority of pupils brought up in elementary schools are not well-grounded in their knowledge of the English language and literature. Generally speaking, they are hurriedly passed through the Entrance Course, and are ushered into the world without the acquisition of such knowledge as is calculated to be of real service to them in after-life, or if they enter higher institutions for the further prosecution of their studies they are often disappointed of success, because of the imperfect training they had received in their earlier education.

"To remedy this evil is the earnest desire of the Committee of Management.

"Their system of tuition will aim to avoid overburdening memory, while they will endeavour to impart healthy exercise to all the intellectual faculties.

"Particular attention will be directed to the moral training of the pupils.

"To the pupils of the junior classes oral lessons will be given on useful subjects as heretofore. But

this will be done in each class separately, since it has been found that such instruction conveyed to several classes simultaneously is comparatively ineffective, owing to the inequality of age and attainments. The services of an efficient staff of teachers have been secured.

"As in the opinion of the Committee of Management the success of instructions given in schools mainly depends on efficient and careful supervision, they have appointed an experienced officer as Assistant Secretary, whose sole duty will be that of supervision, watching over the operations of the Institution in all its details with vigilance and care. This important function is generally performed by Head Masters, in addition to their principal duty of preparing the first class for the Entrance Examination. Experience has proved that both these duties cannot be efficiently performed by one individual, however talented he may be.

" RULES.

" 1. The Institution shall be named the Calcutta Training School.

" 2. It shall consist of three departments, namely, the Infant, the Junior, and the Senior Departments.

" 3. The object of the Institution is to give an efficient elementary education to Hindu youths in the English as well as the Bengali language and literature.

"4. In the Infant Department instruction is imparted in the Bengali language alone.

"5. The rates of schooling fee are as follow :—
" Infant Department, rupee 1 ; Junior Department, rupees 2 ; Senior Department, rupees 3.

"6. Applications for admission are to be made to the Assistant Secretary.

"7. Every applicant admitted must deposit one month's schooling-fee.

"8. The deposits will be returned on leaving the school, if there be no demand against the pupil withdrawing on account of schooling-fee.

"9. Notice of withdrawal must be given in writing to the Assistant Secretary within the first seven days of the month, or schooling-fee shall be charged for that month.

"10. The schooling-fee must be paid in advance on or before the 16th day of each month.

"11. The names of defaulters shall be struck off the roll and their deposits credited to the schooling-fee account.

"12. Parties whose names shall be thus struck off may be re-admitted on payment of a fine of one rupee and a fresh deposit of one month's schooling-fee.

"13. The management of the school shall be vested in a body to be called the Committee of Management.

"14. The Committee of Management shall nominate and appoint from their own body their President and Secretary.

* 15. They shall meet monthly, say on the first Tuesday of every month, or on such other day as they may from time to time appoint.

* 16. The presence of three members shall form a quorum.

* 17. All questions to be decided by a majority of votes.

* 18. The President shall have a second or casting vote, if required to form a majority.

* 19. On the requisition of one or more members, Special meetings of the Committee shall be convened.

* 20. Babu Shama Charan Mullick, late Patron of the school, shall have the privilege of nominating four free-pupils.

* 21. Each member of the Committee of Management shall have the privilege of nominating two free-pupils.

* 22. The Committee shall be at liberty to add to their own body such person or persons whose connection with the school might be deemed desirable.

* 23. The Secretary shall exercise a general control over the internal management of the school.

* 24. The Assistant Secretary shall be present in the school during the school hours.

* 25. He shall carry out the instructions of the Committee of Management.

* 26. He shall keep strict watch over the dis-

cipline and studies of the various classes, and over all the details connected with the internal management of the school.

" 27. He shall examine the senior and junior classes periodically ; the former once in three months and the latter monthly.

" 28. He shall sign the bills for schooling-fees, collect them, and keep accounts of receipts and disbursements.

" 29. The school shall open at 10½ A. M. and close at 4 P. M.

" 30. One teacher at least shall be present on each playground during the time of recreation to watch over the conduct of the pupils.

" 31. Scholarships of ten rupees each shall be awarded to three of the most meritorious pupils for two years to enable them to prosecute their studies in a higher educational institution, such as the Presidency, the Medical, or the Civil Engineering College.

" 32. The funds of the school shall be deposited in the Bank of Bengal or in any other Bank, in the name of a Member and the Secretary.

" 33. Surplus assets shall be appropriated to the benefit of the Institution in such manner as the Committee of Management may decide upon."

* * * *

We again take the following from the first-named pamphlet :—

" 8. Agreeably to the above Rule No. 32, an

account of the said school was opened in the Bank of Bengal in the names of Rai Harachandra Ghosh Bahadur and Pundit Iswarachandra Vidyasagar, in November 1861.

"9. In 1864, the abovenamed Managers of the school changed the name of the school into the Hindu Metropolitan Institution, with a view to have the Institution affiliated to the Calcutta University.

"10. And in that year an application was made to the Syndicate of the Calcutta University for the affiliation of the said Institution up to the B. A. standard, * * *. The application, however, was refused.

"11. In 1865, Babu Khelat Chandra Ghosh, the owner of the house in which the school was located, and with whom a contract had been entered into by Raja Pratapchandra Sinha and Pundit Iswarachandra Vidyasagar to pay enhanced rent on condition that certain additions and alterations were made in the school premises, instituted in the original side of the High Court, Suit No. 882 of 1865, for rent against the said two Managers of the school, who in their written statement filed in that suit say that they among others were Managers of the school * * *"

For ready reference, extracts from the written statement referred to above, filed on the 1st September 1865, are given below :—

"Suit No. 882 of 1865.

"In the High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal.

"Ordinary original Civil Jurisdiction.

"Khelat Chunder Ghose *Plaintiff.*

"Versus

"Raja Pertap Chunder Sing and Iswara

Chunder Vidyasagar *Defendants.*

"Written statement of the Defendants.

"I. In May one thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine the then Committee of Management of a certain Educational Establishment, formerly called the Calcutta Training School, but now called the Metropolitan Institution, rented from the plaintiff the house mentioned in the plaint at the monthly rent of fifty rupees for the use of the said school.

"II. In April one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one a change took place in the Committee of Management, and the defendants, among others, became Managers of the said school.

* * * *

"XII. In February one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four the plaintiff had sent in a bill for rupees one hundred on account of rent for January preceding, which the defendants, along with the other managers of the said school, refused to pay in consequence of the incomplete state of the building. Since then no bill for rent has been presented by the plaintiff.

"XV. In May one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five defendant Iswara Chunder Vidya-sagar, on behalf of himself and the other defendant, proposed to * * Khagendra Nath Mullick as the plaintiff's agent to have the matter settled by arbitration or by the opinion of the Advocate General. The said Khagendra Nath Mullick did not agree to this proposal, and demanded the payment of rupees five hundred on account of rent. The defendants refused to pay any money on account, and the defendant Iswara Chunder Vidya-sagar wrote the following letter to the plaintiff :—

"Babu Khelat Chandra Ghose

"Dear Sir,—I am sorry that I cannot pay you five hundred rupees as a payment on account of the rents of the house occupied by the Metropolitan Institution. I am prepared to pay all arrears at the rate of fifty rupees a month, and shall make the payment on your sending me your bills at that rate.

"Calcutta, 13th May 1863,

"Yours faithfully

(Sd) "Isvar Chandra Sarma

"Honorary Secretary for
the Institution."

We again take the following from the first-named pamphlet :—

"12. It appears from the written statement that dispute had been going on for a long time before the institution of the aforesaid suit. And it is said that Babus Ramanath Tagore, Hiralal

Sil, and Ramgopal Ghosh, who were on terms of friendship with the plaintiff, and wished to have the dispute amicably settled by yielding to his demand, retired from the management of the school on account of their proposal of amicable settlement being disapproved by the Pundit and the other members. These three gentlemen, however, do not appear to have taken any active part in the management of the school ; but two of them, namely, Babus Ramanath Tagore and Ramgopal Ghosh, who were Members of the Senate, countersigned the application for affiliation stated above.

" 13. In 1866, Raja Pratapchandra Sinha died, and in 1868, Rai Harachandra Ghosh Bahadur died, and in consequence Pundit Isvarachandra Vidyasagar became the sole surviving Manager of the said Institution.

" 14. The surplus assets of the Institution were invested in G. P. Notes in the name of Rai Harachandra Ghosh Bahadur, and the said Notes were, after his death, endorsed over by his legal representative to Pundit Iswarachandra Vidyasagar, the surviving Manager of the Institution.

" 15. The account of the Institution in the Bank of Bengal, in the joint names as stated above, was allowed to lapse in 1871, as there were only a few rupees deposited there."

Under Vidyasagar's exceptionally able management, the school made rapid progress, and every

year showed brilliant results at the Calcutta University Entrance Examination. In the beginning of 1864, the name of the institution was converted from "The Calcutta Training School" to "The Hindu Metropolitan Institution," and in April of the same year an application was made for the affiliation of the Institution to the Calcutta University for the instruction of the higher Arts, but it was rejected. The application ran as follows :—

"To H. Scott Smith Esq.,

"Registrar, Calcutta University.

"Sir,

We have the honour to request the favour of your laying before the Syndicate this our application for the affiliation of the Metropolitan Institution to the Calcutta University.

"We beg to annex hereto the declaration and the statement required by the rules for affiliation.

"With regard to the provision proposed to be made for the instruction of the students up to the standard of the B. A. degree, we beg to state that we have decided to organise the instructive staff as indicated in the statement. At present arrangements have been made for the instruction of the students in the course prescribed for the First Examination in Arts, and 39 students have already been admitted to the class which has been

opened from the current session. Three teachers* have been entertained for this special purpose and additions will be made to the instructive staff as the new department will be developed.

"We beg leave to assure the Syndicate that the Metropolitan Institution will be maintained on the proposed footing for five years at least.

"Calcutta, } "We have the honour to be,
2nd April, 1864. } "Sir,

"Your most obedient Servants

(Sd.) "Portap Chandra Sing,

,, "Hara Chandra Ghose,

,, "Isvar Chanda Sarma,

Members of the } (Sd.) "Rama Nath Tagore,
Senate, Calcutta }
University. } "Ram Gopal Ghose."

On the death of Raja Pratap Chandra Sinha and Hara Chandra Ghosh in 1866, the sole responsibility of the management of the Institution fell on the shoulders of Vidyasagar alone. But he was a man of very broad shoulders, and took up the burden cheerily. At the outset and for some time afterwards, Vidyasagar had to lay out a good amount from his private purse to make the school

* "(1) Babu Ananda Krishna Bose, one of the most distinguished senior scholars of the Hindu College. He is a man of solid and extensive acquirements.

"(2) Babu Herumbo Lal Gosain, graduated in the Calcutta University in January, 1864.

"(3) Babu Mohesh Chunder Chatterjee, a distinguished senior scholar of the Sanskrit College."

successful. No doubt, the rate of tuition-fee charged was 3 Rupees a month for every student from the highest to the lowest class, but the number of pupils was too small, for there was the Training Academy standing in rivalry. In a few years, the exceptionally brilliant result of the Metropolitan Institution attracted many youths from other schools, and it then became self-supporting. But to the credit of Vidyasagar it must be said that, like the proprietors of many schools of the present day, he never turned the Institution to a profitable business. Out of the revenues of the school, he never appropriated a single pice to his own personal interest. Even the present authorities of the Institution have admitted in their printed declaration that ;—"He (*i.e.* the Pandit) never made any profit out of the income of the Institution. He did, however, take loans occasionally from the fund of the Institution, but the same was always repaid."

On the 25th January, 1872, Vidyasagar reformed a Committee for the management of the Institution, consisting of himself, Dwarka Nath Mitter, and Kristo Das Paul as members. Two days subsequent to the formation of this Committee an application was again made for the affiliation of the Institution to the Calcutta University up to the First Arts Examination. The application ran as follows :—

" To

" J. Sutcliffe Esq. M. A.

" Registrar to the Calcutta University.

" Sir,

" We, the Managers of the Metropolitan Institution, request that you will be so good as to lay before the Syndicate this our application for its affiliation to the Calcutta University up to the First Arts Examination.

" As required by the rules for affiliation, we hereby declare that the Institution has the means of educating up to the First Arts Examination standard.

" We annex a statement showing the provision contemplated to be made for the instruction of the students up to the same standard after the sanction for affiliation is accorded. We beg leave to state that we will employ senior scholars of the pre-university era or graduates of the Calcutta University as professors of the Institution.

" We hereby assure the Syndicate that the Institution, if affiliated, will be maintained on the proposed footing for five years, and trust that this assurance will be deemed satisfactory.

" Calcutta Metropolitan
Institution

" The 25th January 1872.

(Sd)

"

"

} We have the honour
to be

"Sir

} "Your most obedient
servants

"Isvar Chandra Sarma

"Dwaraka Nath Mitter

"Krito Dass Pal

"Counterstgnd by Mem- bers of the Senate, "Calcutta University	}	(Sd) "Rama Nath Tagor
"List of the Instructive staff to be entertained, Professor of the English Language.		"Rajendra Lala Mitra
"Sanskrit		One
"Mathematics		Ditto
"History and Philosophy		Ditto
(Sd)		"Isvara Chandra Sarma
"		"Dwaraka Nath Mitter
"		"Kristo Dass Pal"

Vidyasagar was not content with merely sending the application to the Registrar of the University, for he knew that the European members of the Syndicate were all against private enterprises of the kind. He, therefore, very wisely addressed to E. C. Bayley, one of the most influential members of the Syndicate, the following letter soliciting his cordial support to the movement :—

" My dear Sir,

"I beg to inform you that we have this day sent in our application for the affiliation of our Institution to the University for submission to the Syndicate at their meeting at this afternoon. I need hardly repeat that I would not have moved in this matter, did I not feel persuaded that we would have your kind support. Last year I took no action, because I could not manage to see you. I do not know how the other members of the Syndicate would feel disposed, but I may mention for

your information that one of the managers of the Institution saw Mr. Sutcliffe and also Mr. Atkinson, and the latter told him that although he had objections to the course proposed, still he had made up his mind not to oppose the application. If it should be urged at the Syndicate that the character of the instruction to be imparted in the Institution would be inferior inasmuch as the instructive staff would enlist exclusively of natives. I would take the liberty to remind you that the Sanskrit College, which teaches up to the B. A. Standard, has an exclusively native staff, and that our Professors would be drawn from the same class of men. We feel confident, that native Professors, if selected with care and judgment, would be found quite competent, but should we from experience feel the necessity of entertaining an English Professor for instruction in the English language in which alone English aid might be necessary, we would certainly employ one—our object, it is needless for me to mention, is the good of the Institution and we will spare no means to accomplish it. I believe there is a desire in certain quarters to know the scale of pay we will allow to our Professors, that is a matter I submit, between the employer and the employee, and the affiliation rules, so far as I can understand them, do not require such details. It will be our aim to combine efficiency with economy, and as I have spent, I may say, my whole life in managing schools, I hope you will

allow me to exercise my own discretion in selecting Professors and regulating their pay.

"I can not too earnestly impress upon your mind that we strongly feel the necessity of converting our Institution into a High School. The high rate of schooling charged at the Presidency College is prohibitory to many middle class youths, while their parents being opposed to their boys being sent to Missionary Colleges, they are obliged to give up academic education after matriculation. This Institution would be a great boon to them.

"The managers of the Institution are myself, Justice Dwarka Nath Mitter, and Babu Kristo Dass Pal. We are satisfied that the means at our command will be quite sufficient for all the purposes of the Institution. But should any deficiency arise, we will be prepared to supply it from our own pockets. I trust our assurance for the maintenance of the Institution on the proposed footing for five years will be deemed satisfactory by the Syndicate.

"Trusting to be excused for the trouble.

"The 27th January 1872,

"I remain,

My Dear Sir,

"Yours sincerely

(Sd). Isvara Chandra Sarma."

"E. C. Bayley Esq., &c. &c."

This time the application was granted, and the Institution was made a Second Grade College, that is, permission was given to the Institution to

train up students for the First Examination in Arts. But Vidyasagar was now beset with difficulties and obstacles. Even his friends doubted the efficiency of the Institution to impart college instruction properly, and they tried to dissuade him from what they thought his fruitless attempts. These rumours tended to dishearten the students, who became fearful of their success. Sometimes their guardians called on Vidyasagar and vexed him with various questions on the subject. It is said, that continued vexations of this kind perplexed him very much. At last, unable to bear them, he appeared one day in the Institution, and told the students of the First Arts Class, that they were free to go away to some other college, if they were afraid of their success. But the boys one and all declared that they would never quit the Institution, come what might. Vidyasagar was very pleased, and assured them that he was anxious for the success of his school, and that he would take every means to make the Institution as efficient as any other college in Bengal. In fact, he did as he said. He engaged the most distinguished native scholars of the time as professors to his college. It must be admitted, to his great credit, that he never employed European teachers in his school.

At the First Arts Examination of 1874, the Metropolitan Institution stood second in order of merit. Every one was amazed at the brilliant success of the native college at its first appearance,

and even Mr. Sutcliffe, the Principal of the Presidency College and Registrar of the Calcutta University was fain to admit that "the Pandit has done wonders." When the result of the examination was out, Vidyasagar was not in Calcutta; he was at his sanitarium, Karmatar. No sooner did he see the result in the Government Gazette, than he hastened to Calcutta, and first of all repaired to the house of the youth, Jogendra Chandra Basu, who had topped the list of successful candidates from the Institution. He congratulated Jogendra Chandra on his eminent success, and asked the youth to call at his own house. When the student appeared before him, he opened his Library, and taking out a complete set of Scott's Waverley Novels, bound in leather adorned with gilt letters of his name, made a gift of it to the youth as prize. He inscribed on the book, with his own hand, as follows :—

"Awarded

"To Jogindra Chandra Bose at the close of his brilliant career as a student in the Metropolitan Institution,

(Sd.) "Isvar Chandra Sarma,

"8th January, 1875."

The exceptionally brilliant success of the Metropolitan attracted many students from other colleges; and the school gradually rose to a very high eminence and prosperity, which encouraged Vidyasagar to raise it to the highest standard. In

1879, the Institution was made a first grade college, and in 1881 students were first sent up to the B. A. examination. Sixteen students came out successful in the first year, and obtained the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The names of the 16 graduated students are given below in Alphabetical order :—Bandyopadhyay Annada Prasad, Kalipada, Kumudnath, Nanda Lal ; Bhattacharya Akshay Kumar, Siva Prasanna ; Chakravarti Jadunath, Kunjavihari, Purna Chandra ; Chattopadhyay Gopal Chandra ; Datta Jogendra Nath, Nabin Chanda ; Mandal Pran Krishna ; Maitra Hem Chandra ; Ray Jagnesvar ; Ray Chaudhuri Asutosh.

In the space of 12 years from 1881 to 1892, 498 students of the Metropolitan Institution obtained the B. A. degree, and 33 youth obtained the M. A. degree. Since 1885, the honours course has been introduced into the B. A. class instead of the M. A. class. In the 8 years from 1885 to 1892, 86 pupils of this Institution obtained the degree of honours with B. A. In 1882, the Metropolitan Institution was affiliated to the University of Calcutta for the instruction of the Law Course. In the next ten years 513 youths obtained the B. L. degree. Out of this number three topped the list in 1883, 1885, and 1886, and won a prize of 100 Rupees each. This must be considered a most satisfactory result for a private institution under native managers and Indian professors. Such an

extraordinary success was due to Vidyasagar's able management and tact in the selection of teachers. He never entertained European professors. He selected for his professors Indians of most solid attainments, whose names, particularly that of Babu Prosanna Kumar Lahiri, should be perpetuated along with the Institution.

Vidyasagar had great abilities at management of educational institutions. We have seen how he introduced various reforms into the Sanskrit College and made it eminently successful. He had one great merit ; whatever he handled, he applied himself heart and soul to its improvement. When Vidyasagar took over the management of the Metropolitan Institution on his own shoulders, he devoted to it all his energy, attention, and experience, and soon brought about many reforms, which raised it to such conspicuous eminence. He paid the teachers of his college and schools handsomely, for he never tried to profit himself by the income of these institutions. We have already said that he was always averse to infliction of corporal punishment to school boys, and he interdicted such punishment altogether from his institutions. Mention has been made before how he compelled one of the teachers to retire from his service for disregarding his injunctions in this respect. His instruction to the schoolmasters was that they should never resort to bodily chastisement, but try to rectify the boys by kind and gentle words and

treatment. When any boy was incorrigible or refractory, Vidyasagar would drive him out. Allusion has been made before how he once drove out all the boys of the Second Class of the Syambazar Branch of the Metropolitan Institution. He was very fond of the School-boys. It is said that on one occasion, the students of his school prayed to him for a holiday on account of the *Paus* festival, Vidyasagar granted their prayer, and, at the same time, asked them where they would get their cakes from, since most of them had their homes in the interior of the country, a great way off Calcutta. The boys replied humorously that they would come to his (Vidyasagar's) house for cakes. He was greatly delighted at the idea, and fed all the boys sumptuously with cakes of various kinds.

Vidyasagar had another very great merit. He superintended every thing personally. He was never content to rely solely on others. He often paid surprise visit to his schools. He had no fixed day or time of paying these visits. It generally happened that while a teacher was seriously engaged in imparting instruction, Vidyasagar stepped slowly into the room and stood behind the teacher hearing his lectures, and as soon as the teacher saw him he tried to rise from his seat to receive the mighty visitor. But Vidyasagar would prevent him, saying,—‘Do not rise from your seat, but go on with your duty. In trying to show me respect

you may fail in your own duty.' If he saw any boy slumbering in the class, he would at once remove him from the class and provide for his sleep in some separate place. These surprise visits had the effect of keeping both the teachers and the students always alert and attentive to their respective works. Whenever a teacher or student called on him at his residence after school hours, he would leave everything aside, and first of all feed him with refreshments. It is said that on such occasions he would peel and divide Mangoes and other fruits with his own hands, and feed his visitor with them sumptuously. If any of the servants of the Institution was ill, he would take great care of him and provide for his proper medical treatment. When Kasi, the old porter of the Institution died of Carbuncle, Vidyasagar was very sorry, for he had not been told of his illness, and consequently no provisions had been made for the poor man's treatment. Henceforth he engaged a medical practitioner for the teachers and other servants of the Institution.

We have already said that the monthly rate of tuition-fee in this Institution was 3 rupees per head. But those poor boys who could not afford to pay even this small fee, were allowed by him to read as free-students. Sometimes unscrupulous persons took undue advantage of his kindness and deceived him in this respect. On one occasion, a wealthy man of Calcutta falsely recom-

mended a boy to him as very poor and unable to pay his school-fee. Vidyasagar kindly allowed the boy to be admitted as a free student. In fact, the boy was the rich man's brother-in-law (wife's brother), but Vidyasagar did not know it then. Latterly, one day, when he paid a visit the Institution he saw that the poor boy was very gaudily dressed and was eating rich refreshments. He was quite surprised and on enquiry came to know the true story of the boy. He at once drove the boy out of the school.

There is no reckoning how many unscrupulous, deceitful persons outraged on his simplicity and kindness and cheated him out of his money. On one occasion, he received a letter purporting to have been written by a lower form student of the Uttarpara school. The contents of the letter were to the effect ;—'I am a parentless, poor boy. I have no one in the world to call my own. A kind neighbour provides me with my boarding. I have been allowed to read in the Uttarapara School as a free-student. I have not a single pice to pay the ferryman, and cross the river to visit your feet. If you should be pleased to send me the following books, I may prosecute my studies for this year.' Vidyasagar at once despatched the required books to the address of the boy at the Uttarapara School. Every succeeding year, the boy wrote to him, saying that he was promoted to the next higher class, and asking for some

books appropriate to that form, and every year, the kind-hearted Vidyasagar sent him the required books. Thus the boy deceived him continually for five years. A few days after books had been sent on for the last time, the Head Master of the Uttarpara School paid a visit to our hero. In course of conversation, Vidyasagar asked the visitor if he knew a certain boy of the name of reading in the first class and how he fared with his studies. The visitor did not know the boy, and he said that there was no boy of that name either in his first or second class. Vidyasagar said in a humorous tone,—‘You are a very good master, I see ! The boy has been asking me for books for these five years on the representation of being promoted annually to the next higher class from the fifth to the first, and I have been sending him in the required books regularly to the address of your school, and yet you say, there is no boy of that name in your school. You do not seem to know all the boys.’ The Head Master was somewhat abashed, and promised to make enquiries and let him know the result in no time. The next day, the Head Master enquired for the boy in all the classes from the highest down to the lowest, but failed to find him out. At last, it transpired that there was a book-seller of that name close to the school. On pressure being put to the man, he admitted that he had got the books fraudulently and disposed of them. The Head Master lost no time in informing

our hero of what had really happened. Vidyasagar was mortified at the news, but took no steps to have the culprit punished. He was only heard to say,—‘How can that land expect to improve, which gives birth to such deceitful children?’

To the infinite credit of Vidyasagar, it must be admitted by all, that he was the pioneer of private enterprise in this respect. A number of schools and colleges have afterwards been started in imitation of the Metropolitan Institution, and their eminent success at the present day is due to their emulation of their eldest sister. The Hon’ble C. E. Buckland in his ‘Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors’ says,—“The establishment of the Metropolitan Institution in Calcutta in 1864, and its successful working under his management as a first grade College, are well-known to the educational history of Bengal ; it was the prototype and pattern of many similar Institutions. The Metropolitan Institution had an attached school of 800 boys, besides 4 or 5 branches in different quarters of the town of Calcutta. * * *

The magnificent building of the Metropolitan Institution was erected by him” (Vidyasagar) “at a cost of a *lakh* and a half of rupees ; the expenditure was primarily incurred at his own cost ; though it was afterwards recouped in a large measure from the surplus income of the College and its branch schools.” Such is the eulogium

bestowed on Vidyasagar's management of educational institutions by a European high official of the Government of India.

In 1864, appeared his *Akhyamanjari Part I*. It is a Bengali Reader for young children, full of instructive lessons. The language of the book is as excellent as that of his former publications of the same class.

CHAPTER XXIII.

BETHUNE SCHOOL.

The reader is already aware that Vidyasagar was co-adjutor and fellow-worker of Bethune in the foundation of the best female school in India, known by the name of Bethune School, and that he was its Secretary. It is needless to repeat that he was one of the greatest promoters of the education of the women of this country, and took the keenest interest in the welfare of the Bethune Female School. He encouraged the pupils of this institution in different ways. At the prize distribution meeting of the school held on 13th March, 1865, Vidyasagar gave, out of his own purse, a gold necklace as prize to a meritorious girl. Lord and Lady Lawrence (the then Governor-general of India and his wife) were among those present at this meeting. They were highly delighted, and congratulated Vidyasagar on his award of the handsome gifts.

In the latter part of 1866, Miss Mary Carpenter

arrived at Calcutta, after visiting the other important cities and towns of India. It was in the house of this Miss's father, Mr. Carpenter, a clergyman of Bristol, that Raja Ram Mohan Ray had put up and died. Miss Carpenter was, at that time, a young girl. It is said that it was Ram Mohan who first instilled into the tender heart of this girl a love and good-will for this poor country. Subsequently this sentiment of hers towards a subject race of ancient civilisation was fostered greatly by the eloquence of Keshub Chunder Sen, one of the greatest orators that the country ever produced, with whom she had formed a great friendship. Shortly after her arrival in Calcutta, she expressed a desire to make acquaintance of the truly patriotic Vidyasagar. Mr. Atkinson, the then Director of Public Instruction, addressed to Vidyasagar a letter on the subject, which ran as follows :—

“ 27 Novr. 1866.

“ My dear Pundit,

“ Miss Carpenter whose name you are no doubt acquainted with, is anxious to make your acquaintance and to talk to you about her projects for furthering Female Education in India ; could you come at the Bethune School to meet her on Thursday morning about half past 11 O'clock ? I am going to take her there at that time for a first visit which is intended to be quite of a private character, and it would be as good opportunity to

introduce you to her. On another occasion I think she will be glad to meet the gentlemen of the committee, but it will be better to defer this till Mr. Seton Karr has returned to Calcutta.

“Yours very truly

(Sd.) “W. S. Atkinson.”

On the appointed day, Vidyasagar went to the Bethune School, and met Miss Carpenter. At the very first meeting each read the other's heart, and soon the acquaintance of a short time grew into sincere friendship. Miss Carpenter visited also some of the female schools of places neighbouring to Calcutta, and in these visits she would generally insist on the accompaniment of Vidyasagar. On the 16th December, 1866, she paid a visit to the Uttarapara Girl-School, founded by Bijay Krishna Mukharji, in company with Mr. Atkinson, the Director of Public Instruction, Mr. Woodrow, an Inspector of Schools, and Vidyasagar. On their return journey, as Vidyasagar was being driven in a buggy in company with another gentleman, who was driving the vehicle, to the Bally Railway Station, the buggy suddenly overturned in trying to turn to a cross way, and Vidyasagar was thrown away to some distance, where he fell heavily and lost his consciousness. A great crowd of sight-seers assembled on the road, but none ventured to advance to his help. Miss Carpenter was following at a distance in another vehicle in company with her two European friends. When she

arrived at the spot where a large crowd had assembled she alighted from her carriage to enquire into the cause of the immense gathering, and to her utter dismay, she found her Indian friend lying senseless by the wayside. She at once ran to him, and with great difficulty took him up into her lap and sat there nursing him with the tenderest care. She wiped his sweating face with her own handkerchief, and began to fan him, while Mr. Woodrow brought some water and sprinkled it on his face and head. After much effort, he was brought back to consciousness. When he opened his eyes and was able to speak, Miss Carpenter's delight knew no bounds. He was then carried to his residence at Cornwallis Street, whence he was removed by his dear friend, Raj Krishna, to the latter's house. His thighs were greatly swollen. He had sustained a severe injury in his liver. Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar and other medical attendants of Vidyasagar suspected that his liver had been overturned and that an abscess had formed in that gland. After one month's continued treatment he recovered a little, but the fatal malady which ultimately carried him away from this world had its origin in this sad accident. Henceforth his health completely broke down. He had often to suffer from head diseases and disorders of the bowels. His digestive powers lessened in strength, and consequently he was obliged to take light food. His stomach could not assimilate milk. His food

now consisted of a small quantity of boiled rice with fish-broth in the morning, and a little barley-bread in the evening. Latterly he could not digest even such light diet. He was often heard to regret, that in his early years want prevented him from taking milk, and again in later years illness restricted that delicious drink, and that his courage, energy, perseverance, exertion, mental and moral strength, everything began to lose its force since this accident. From this time he had to seek change of climate at Chandernagore, Burdwan, Cawnpore and other healthy places of the time. But still, in spite of his decayed health, he had to work hard for the good of the country, like a true patriotic hero, as he was.

Miss Carpenter raised a movement for the establishment of a Female Normal School, in connection with the Bethune School, for training up School-mistresses and Lady Teachers for the *Zenana*. Sir William Grey, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, and some other influential European officials of Government, and Keshub Chunder Sen, M. M. Ghose, Dvijendra Nath Tagore and some other Indians of position and education, were in favour of the movement, but Vidyasagar was against this innovation. A committee was formed to consider the propriety of the measure ; Vidyasagar was in this committee. In the meantime, Keshub Chunder Sen and some of his followers convened a meeting in the Brahmo

Samaj Hall and decided upon memorialising the Government for the opening of a Female Normal School. Vidyasagar was quite dissatisfied with the summary manner in which the decision was arrived at, and he withdrew his name from the committee. The letter that he addressed to Keshub Chunder Sen and others on the subject is quoted below ;—

“Baboos Keshub Chunder Sen, M. M. Ghose
“ and Dijendra Nath Tagore.

“Gentlemen,

“With reference to the proceedings of the meeting held at the Brahmo Samaj on the evening of last Saturday, resulting in the election of ourselves to form a committee for the purpose of memorialising Government on the subject of the establishment of a Normal School for the training of Female Teachers I have to observe that a question of such vital importance deserves a more serious consideration than was given to it on that occasion. Before any action was taken, it was, in my opinion, necessary to ascertain the views of such of the leading members of our community as are known to take an interest in the cause of female education. But as they were neither invited to the meeting, nor was their co-operation sought, I do not think it advisable for me to join in the proposed representation to Government. In fact, when I was asked to attend, I was given to understand that a private conference with Miss

Carpenter was intended. I had not the remotest idea that the meeting would be formal or that a question of such grave importance would be decided so summarily. As I was thus taken by surprise, I did not feel myself in a position to take part in the discussion or to express my sentiments on the subject. I need hardly add that under the circumstances set forth above, I am under the painful necessity of withdrawing myself from the Committee.

"3rd December 1866,

" I have &c.

(Sd.) " Isvar Chandra Sarma."

On receipt of the petition referred to before, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal wrote on the 1st September, 1867, a long letter to Vidyasagar asking for his opinion on the proposal set on foot of converting the Bethune School to a Female Normal School. In reply to it, Vidyasagar also wrote a long letter to Sir William Grey, strongly opposing the measure and clearly setting forth his reasons. The letter ran as follows : —

" Calcutta, 1st October 1867.

" My dear Sir,

" Since we met last, I have made careful enquiries and have thought over the subject, but I regret to say that I see no reason to alter my opinion as regards the difficulty of practically carrying out Miss Carpenter's scheme of rearing a body of Native Female Teachers either in connection with the Bethune School or independently such as

may be acceptable to the bulk of the Hindu community and worthy of their confidence. Indeed, the more I think about it the more am I convinced that I cannot conscientiously advise the Government to take the direct responsibility of setting in motion a project which, in the present state of the native society and native feeling, I feel satisfied, will be attended with failure. You can easily conceive whether respectable Hindus will allow their grown up female relatives to follow the profession of tuition and necessarily break through the present seclusion, when they do not permit the young girls of ten or eleven years to quit the zenana after they are married. The only persons, whose services may be available, are unprotected and helpless widows, and apart from the consideration whether morally they will be fit agents for educational purposes, I have no hesitation in saying that the very fact of their dispensing with the Zenana seclusion and offering themselves as public teachers will lay them open to suspicion and distrust and thus neutralize the beneficial action aimed at.

"I think the Government cannot pursue a better course on this subject than what has been indicated in the India Government's letter lately published in the papers. The best test of popular feeling will be the application of the grant-in-aid principle. If the people are willing to carry out Miss Carpentr's idea, they should be assisted with

liberal grants by Government. Although the great bulk of the Hindu community, so far as I can perceive, will not avail themselves of such assistance, still there are particular individuals who seem to be very sanguine on this subject and if they are sincere and earnest they will at any rate, it may be hoped, come forward and with Government aid, begin the experiment.

“ I am free to confess that I do not place much reliance in them ; but they will have no right to complain under the rules announced by the Government of India.

“ I need hardly assure you that I fully appreciate the importance and desirableness of having female teachers for female learners ; but if the social prejudice of my countrymen did not offer an insuperable bar, I would have been the first to second the proposition and lend my hearty co-operation towards its furtherance. But when I see that success is by no means certain and that the Government is likely to place itself in a false and disagreeable position, I cannot persuade myself to support the experiment.

“ As regards the Bethune School I entirely go with you that the results are not proportionate to the amount expended upon it, but at the same time I cannot recommend its abolition altogether. As a memento of the services to the cause of female enlightenment in India of the great philanthropist whose name the Institution bears, it has, I submit,

a claim to the support of Government. In the next place, it is very desirable that there should be a well organized female school in the heart of the metropolis to serve as a model to sister institutions in the interior. The moral influence of the present institution in native society has been undoubtedly great. It has, in fact, paved the way to female education in surrounding districts and this, in my humble opinion, is no mean return for the large sums which have been annually expended upon it. But I must say that there is great room for economy and improvement. The expenses, I think, can be reduced to nearly half the present amount without detriment to the efficiency of the Institution.

"I intend to go to the North Western Provinces shortly for prolonged change for the benefit of my health and if you wish to know my views on the re-organization of the Bethune School, I shall be happy to await your return to Calcutta and confer with you on the subject.

"I remain, My Dear Sir,

"Yours Sincerely

(Sd.) "Isva Chandra Sarma

"To the Hon'ble William Grey."

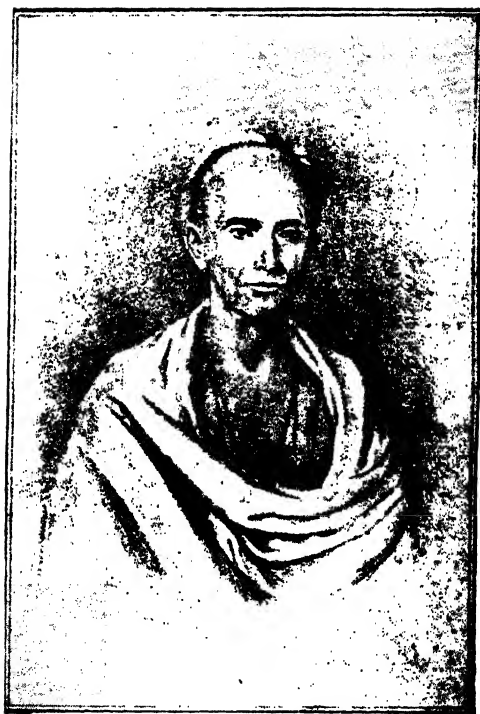
The Lieutenant Governor was very pleased with Vidyasagar's letter, and wrote in reply;—

"Oct. 14, 1867

"Sunderbuns

"My Dear Sir,

"I am greatly obliged to you for your letter of



Thakurdas Bandyopadhyay,
Vidyasagar's father.

the 1st. Inst ; it is both useful and interesting. I hope you will not, on any account, postpone your visit to the N. W. Provinces, and I trust that you will obtain a revival of health from the change.

"Should I find you in Calcutta however a few days hence, I shall be most happy to see you and to hear your views as to the reorganization of the Bethune School. Otherwise you can perhaps find leisure to write to me on the subject from the N. West.

"If you should desire to have letters of introduction to any of the Govt. officers in the N. W. Provs. I shall be glad to assist you in that way. I shall be at Belvedere from the 18th inclusive.

"I am yours sincerely,

(Sd) "W. Grey"

Vidyasagar's idea was, that if too much forwardness were shown in this direction at a time, when female education had only begun to be appreciated by the country, the very ground-work of the cause might receive a sudden shock and might be wholly undermined. Besides, he firmly believed that Hindu women of the higher classes would never consent to be trained up, and to work, as Female Teachers. Kristo Das Pal, the renowned editor of the Hindoo Patriot, and some other gentlemen of station and influence, were of the same opinion with him. In order to make a formal opposition to the innovation, a committee was formed with the Hon'ble Seton Karr as its President, and the

Hon'ble Sambhu Nath Pandit, Mr. W. S. Atkinson, Raja Kali Kristo, Hara Chandra Ghose, Kasi Prasad Ghosh, Rajendra Nath Datta, Nursing Chander Dutt, Hara Nath Ray, Kumar Harendra Krishna and Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar as its members.

After much debate and controversy, the Government resolved upon contributing a large Grant-in-aid towards the opening of a Female Normal School in connection with the Bethune School. But for two succeeding years, no action was taken. At last Babu Dwarka Nath Ganguli, under the instructions of Babu Radhika Prasanna Mukharji, who was, at that time, a Deputy Inspector of Schools, set to work in right earnest. Through his strenuous exertions, a class was opened with only 5 or 6 pupils. It had worked only a year and a half, when Sir George Campbell, the next Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, abolished the training department altogether.

Difference of opinion in this respect and on several other matters compelled Vidyasagar to cut off his connection with the Bethune School, and he resigned his honorary office of its Secretary in 1869. Before his resignation he had to engage himself in 1868 in the settlement of a serious question in connection with this school. There were several complaints against Miss Pigott, the Lady Superintendent of the School, that the institution was deteriorating on

account of her carelessness and that she made the pupils sing songs on Christianity. A committee was formed to enquire into the complaints. Vidyasagar and Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari were in the Sub-Committee, which was formed under the general committee. They found Miss Pigott guilty, and she was dismissed.

In the latter part of 1865, Vidyasagar's father, Thakurdas, retired from the world, and settled down in Benares. When Vidyasagar heard of his father's project, he went down to Birsingha, and tried his best to dissuade his father. But when he saw that his dear parent was firmly determined on the step, he was fain to let him go. Before Thakurdas's departure, Vidyasagar had his portrait painted. At the same time, he had his mother's portrait painted as well. A story is told of an incident in connection with this portrait-painting. For the edification of the reader, we will briefly narrate the story here.

Sometime before this, Mr. Hudson, a European portrait-painter, had been engaged in painting the portraits of the members of the Paikpara Raj family. Vidyasagar had a great familiarity with the Rajas, and he often called at their house. The painter was attracted by the amiable appearance of Vidyasagar, and he drew up a likeness of the latter gratuitously. Vidyasagar was looking out for opportunities of recompensing the painter, when he heard the news of his father's intended

departure to Benares. He fetched his parents to Calcutta, and determined on having their portraits painted by Hudson. Vidyasagar devised a means of inducing his mother to sit before a European, and the following dialogue passed between the parent and her son :—

Son.—‘Mother, a very good portrait-painter has been engaged in the Paikpara Raj house; I wish to have your likeness painted by him.’

Mother.—‘O! no, what shall I do with my portrait? Shame! Fie!’

Son.—‘The portrait is not for you, mother. It is for me. If I have a likeness of yours with me, I can have a look at it, whenever my thoughts run after you.’

The mother had nothing to say against it, and she said, though reluctantly :—

‘Then do as you like.’

Son.—‘Shall I bring the European here, or you will go there with me?’

Mother.—‘The painter, a European! No, my dear child, I can not sit before a European to have my likeness drawn.’

Son.—‘He is a very good man; he has drawn a likeness of mine, but received no remuneration. He loves me very dearly; there is no harm in your sitting before him.’

Mother.—‘Do as you think best; but mind, I cannot go anywhere else. Better bring him here.’

Son.—‘Everything is ready there, and if I break up the arrangements and bring him here, most probably the picture won’t be nice.’

Mother.—‘When you hold to a thing, it is always very difficult to put you back. Do as you like. Only, if I go at all I must go with you. Should there be any blame in it, people would not come forward to censure me; they will then blame you. They will say that a great man like Vidyasagar took his mother to the Paikpara Raj house to have her likeness drawn. Never mind, I will go with you.’

Vidyasagar had the two portraits of his dear parents hung on his walls, and saluted them every morning. It is said, that after the death of his parents, he saw the pictures twice daily, and tears trickled down his breast in incessant torrents as he looked at them.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE GREAT FAMINE.

In the middle of 1866, Raja Pratap Chandra Sinha of Paikpara was severely ill at Kandi, his ancestral home. When the news reached Vidyasagar, he hastened to Kandi, accompanied with the best native medical practitioner, Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar. But the illness grew more serious every day, and at last his life was despaired of. He was removed to Paikpara, where he expired at

3 o'clock in the morning of the 19th July, 1866. The deceased Raja was a great friend of Vidyasagar's. Before his death, he had requested his friend to be a Trustee of his estate, but Vidyasagar declined. The Hindoo Patriot of the 23rd July of the same year thus spoke of the Raja :— " He (*i. e.*, Raja Pratap Chandra) was one of the principal supporters of the female schools established and managed by Pandit Issur Chandra Vidyasagar." Vidyasagar was heartily grieved at the untimely death of his dear friend.

On the death of the Raja the state of his family and estate was most deplorable. For arrears of land revenue the estate was about to be put to auction. At the request of the deceased Raja's grandmother (father's mother), Rani Katyayani, Vidyasagar, accompanied with the Raja's minor sons, interviewed Sir Cecil Beadon, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. At his earnest solicitation, Beadon saved the estate from revenue sale and placed it under the management of the Court of Wards. It was at the instance of Vidyasagar, that the minor sons of the Raja were saved from the hands of the Wards' Institution. They were placed under the care of Rani Katyayani, and several European and native gentlemen were appointed their guardians, among whom Vidyasagar was one.

He had thus to visit the *Raj-bati* often. One day, on his way thither, he was confronted by a

poor shopkeeper, by name Ramdhan, an old acquaintance of his, who saluted him, and asked him respectfully to step over to his shop. Vidyasagar followed him to his place, which stood by the wayside, and there took his seat upon the grass in front of the shop, and began smoking a hookah offered by Ramdhan. In the meantime, some officers of the Paikpara estate saw him in that situation. At last, when Vidyasagar called at the *Raj-bati*, the officers winked at him, and some of them even ventured to remonstrate with him on the impropriety of his mixing with such vulgar people. Vidyasagar smiled, and said with great emphasis, that the rich and the poor were all alike in his eyes.

On another occasion, as he was sitting in the *Raj-bati*, a beggar approached the gates and asked for alms. The Darwans drove him away. Vidyasagar was deeply afflicted at the sight. Some say, that henceforth he scarcely visited the *Raj-bati*. But we have been informed from a reliable source, that there arose a graver cause, which made Vidyasagar cease his visits to the Raj-house. Some of the Kumars (sons of the Raja) had grown wanton, and Vidyasagar was afraid of the loss of his respect. But the Kumars' respectful demeanour towards him never diminished for a moment. Kumar Indra Chandra often paid him respectful visits. If any one ever advised him to put a Darwan at his gates, he would at once point

to the Paikpara *Raj-bati*. He was generally heard to say,—‘If I place a Darwan at my gates, the beggar shall be deprived of his handful rice, and the visitor shall be prevented from having an easy interview with myself. Death is by far preferable to that.’ Sometimes he warned his grandsons,—‘If I ever hear that a visitor has been prevented by any one of my house from coming up to me, I shall at once drive the offender out. I have witnessed inconveniences caused by the placing of Darwans at rich men’s gates and I do not wish to bring those inconveniences into my own house.’

He never put the slightest obstacle in the way of a visitor’s easy entrance into his house. On one occasion, as he was sitting one day at about noon-time with a *hookah* in hand after dinner, a man with a very irate appearance appeared hurriedly before him, and enquired for Vidyasagar. It is needless to say that the man did not know Vidyasagar in person, but only in name. The man was an inhabitant of East Bengal, and had come to Calcutta on business. He had, that day, tried to have an interview with two or three wealthy persons of the city, but had failed to see them, and hence had lost his temper. Vidyasagar asked him to take his seat. But the man said, not until he could see Vidyasagar. He also said that he had been baffled in his endeavours to have interviews with some other great men of

the city, whose names he had heard before, and he now wanted to see if Vidyasagar was also a great man of that nature. Vidyasagar then asked the man if he had eaten anything that day. The visitor answered in the negative, and said that he was too intent on having an interview with Vidyasagar to give heed to the demands of nature. He repeatedly insisted on instantaneous visit with Vidyasagar. In the meantime, refreshments were ready for the man at Vidyasagar's hints. He then said to the man,—‘You shall have your intended visit, as soon as you have partaken of the refreshments.’ When the visitor had thus been made to refresh himself, he was somewhat pacified. Vidyasagar then disclosed himself, to the utter amazement of the visitor, who now acknowledged that Vidyasagar was really equal to his great name.

But this unrestricted admittance caused him now and then no small amount of inconvenience and annoyance. Once on a time, several residents of Uttarpara came to his residence to see him with the object of securing his recommendations for employment. It so happened at that time, that his youngest daughter was critically ill. He was on the upper floor tending the sick girl. He was very anxious for the child's life; his mind was in a most perturbed state. The medical attendant, Dr. Amulya Charan Basu, who was sitting in a room on the ground floor, inform

ed the visitors of the state of Vidyasagar's mind, and told them to come some other day. They would not listen to him, and sent word to Vidyasagar by a servant. The domestic returned and said that he was instructed by his master to inform them of the serious illness of his master's daughter, and to request them to call another day, as his master was quite unable to leave the bedside of his dear girl. The men would hear of no denial. They began to ascend the stairs. Vidyasagar was now compelled to come down, but he was somewhat annoyed, and thus addressed the intruders;—‘I see, you understand your necessity best. You have not the slightest pity or mercy in you. Please, leave me alone for this day, and call some other day.’ The impudent trespassers hung down their heads in shame, and precipitately left the house.

In 1866, a Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council for legislation on the Alienation of *Devatra* property. The Board of Revenue asked Vidyasagar for his opinion on the subject based on Hindu Law. Vidyasagar communicated his opinion by a letter, which speaks for itself, and is therefore given below :—

“To

“R. B. Chapman Esquire

“Secretary to the Board of Revenue.

“Sir,

“With reference to the correspondence forwarded

to me under docket No. 656 B. dated 13th ultimo, I beg to state that there do not appear to be any texts in the Books on Hindu Law which either permit or prohibit the alienation of *Devatra* property. But the general practice of the country does not sanction the disposition of such property in any shape. In fact, when Endowments of this description are made by Hindus, they make them with the sole object of securing the property endowed from any sort of alienation, and attach conditions accordingly. Trustees are consequently prohibited from disposing of the property. Though no distinct ruling on the point is traceable in any of the Text Books, no alienation can be permitted in accordance with the principles of Hindu Law. According to that Law, alienation cannot take place except with the *express consent* of the owner, and as in the case of *Devatra* property the Idol, to which it is consecrated, is the owner, it cannot be disposed of except with its consent, which, as a matter of course, can neither be given nor extorted. Hence, *Devatra* property has become inalienable.

"2. I am fully aware of the difficulties which may occasionally be felt by trustees in the execution of the trusts in connection with Religious Establishments. Circumstances may arise, which may compel them to incur liabilities, which the fixed income of the Trust will never enable them to meet; because, in many cases, the endowers appropriate the income in such a way as to leave little or no mar-

gin for any extraordinary or unforeseen expenditure connected with the endowments, such as repairs of temples, payment of Government Revenue in cases when it is not realized from the Ryots in consequence of draught, inundation or other causes &c. It cannot be expected that Trustees will meet this expenditure from their own funds or from subscriptions. Some provision must therefore be made by Law for the purpose, and on this consideration, I see no objection to section I of the Bill No 8 of 1866, if it be so worded as to express distinctly that the funds raised by the disposition of the property are to be appropriated solely to meet extraordinary or unavoidable expenditure connected with Religious Endowments. Disposal of Devatra property for such purposes would not, in my humble opinion, be inconsistent with the principle of Hindu Law. The chief object of all endowments is to guard against misappropriation, and as the extra expenditure referred to is solely and entirely required for Devatra purposes, it can, on no account, be considered in the light of misappropriation. Nay, if the Idol could be made to speak, it would certainly not only have given its consent, but would have also insisted on the disposition of its property under such contingencies.

"3. Alienation being allowable only under the circumstances above set forth, section II of the Bill appears to me to be objectionable, as it confers



Bhagabati Devi, Vidyasagar's mother.

undue powers on Trustees, and prescribes that it is not necessary for purchasers or mortgagees of Devatra property to enquire into the necessity or expediency of the sale or mortgage or to see that on more than is absolutely required is raised. With such unlimited powers on the part of Trustees, and freedom from all responsibility on that of the purchasers or mortgagees, the property may probably be liable to misappropriation against which it is absolutely necessary to guard. I believe that the Law in regard to the disposition of other Trusts enjoins upon purchasers or mortgagees to make reasonable enquiries about the immediate necessity for the alienation. The benefit to be conferred or the danger to be averted by alienating a portion of the Trust property must be the criterion by which the validity of such alienation is to be judged of. With such provisions in cases of other Trusts, it is not clear why similar conditions should not be attached to transfers of Devatra Trusts. I would therefore take the liberty to suggest that section II may be so modified as to guard against any possible chance of misappropriation. With such modifications, the Bill would, I believe, be opposed neither to the spirit of Hindu Law nor to the general feelings of the Hindu community on the subject.

Calcutta,
The 6th August
1866.

} "I have the honor to be
Sir
"Your Most obedt. servant
(Sd.) Issurchandra Sarma."

The Government saw the soundness of Vidyasagar's arguments, and the Bill was ultimately rejected.

In the beginning of 1867, Vidyasagar visited Birsingha. About this time, the relations of a helpless widow were endeavouring to misappropriate her landed property. The widow came to Vidyasagar, and with tearful eyes besought his help. He sent for the widow's relations, and requested them not to meddle with the helpless woman's affairs, but they would not listen to him. They brought a suit against the widow ; but when they heard that Vidyasagar was determined to help the poor woman by all means, they desisted from their unlawful attempts, and never more appeared in court.

At this time, he made arrangements for separate boarding of his second and third brothers and of his only son, Narayan Chandra, and provided for their monthly allowances in proportion to their respective needs. The main cause of this disruption was intermittent quarrel among the members of the large family, which disturbed now and then the tranquility of the household. Separate houses had already been built for his two sisters, some time before this. Servants were engaged and provisions made for the separate boarding of the boys of other places, who lodged in his house and read in his free school. Shortly afterwards, a separate house was erected for his son, and arrangements

were made of keeping his mother with himself in Calcutta.

From this, it is apparent that Vidyasagar was not well disposed towards the Hindu system of joint family. It was not his innate fault. It was his English education that produced in him this failing. It was his want of insight that led him to meddle with the customs of Hindu Society, which is self-evident from the dismemberment of his joint family. The practice of the Hindu in his own household, in his dealings with Society, and in everything else is conducive to the attainment of spiritual knowledge. Every usage, every custom, every practice has been prescribed by the saintly *Rishis* with a view to enable the common laymen to begin to learn the secrets of the Hindu religion. Joint family is a prominent member of Hindu Society—the principal means of the realisation of *Yoga*—the royal road to salvation. What is *Yoga*? It is nothing but union or communion—complete absorption—in Divinity. It is nothing but the combination of one with the other—the conversion of duality into unity. The union of self with the whole world, the annihilation of the universe in self, the feeling of the existence of every external thing in self, this is the high way to redemption for the Hindu. This idea begins in one's own family. It begins between one and one—*vis.* between preceptor and disciple, or between husband and wife, or between parent and son, or between brother and

sister, and so forth. When two are united, it is easy to attract a third by the double force, when the three are united, the receipt of a fourth and fifth and sixth becomes still easier and easier. When one has thus absorbed others in him, one does not feel their separate individuality, but bears equal feelings of love and humanity for each of them. In the commencement, this sort of union is easily realisable in one's own family, the members having natural ties of affection for one another. It is for this reason, that the system of joint family is so highly commendable to the true Hindu.

The scarcity of rainfall in Bengal in the year 1866 caused a great scarcity of food grains. In the beginning of the next year, a fearful famine broke out in the country, which assumed a serious aspect in the months of May, June and July. The whole of Orissa and the southern part of Bengal was ravaged by it. Language is inadequate to describe the sufferings of the people of those parts. The very recollection of their miseries even at the present day sends a thrilling sensation throughout the frame and makes the hairs of the body stand on their ends. They knew not how to appease their hunger. They ate leaves and roots of weeds and plants indiscriminately, whether these were esculent or not. They deserted their homes and ran to distant lands in search of a handful of rice. The mother deserted her dear baby ; the father, his child ; the son, his parents ; the husband, his

wife ; the wife, her husband ; the brother, his sister, the sister, her brother ; and fled to towns in hopes of getting something to put into their burning stomachs. But many of them could not reach their destinations. They were reduced to mere skeletons, and, what with faint and what with continued want of food and consequent illness, lay dead in numbers by the wayside. The small space at our command will not permit us to enter into a detailed account of the state of the country at that time. We will confine ourselves to that portion only, with which our benevolent, heroic Vidysagar was connected.

He was at that time in Calcutta, and had no information of the great scarcity that raged fearfully in his own native village and its neighbourhood, till he saw some correspondence on the subject in the Hindoo Patriot and shortly afterwards received a letter from his own home bearing the horrible news that people were dying in numbers from want of food. The news gave him, tender-hearted as he was, a terrible shock, and he was moved to a flood of tears. He at once informed the Government of the fatal calamity and requested for speedy succour. They listened to him and instituted immediate enquiries. They opened feeding camps in the different parts of the country, but these were not amply adequate to meet the urgent demands. The correspondent of the Hindoo Patriot said, that Babu Hem Chandra Kar, Deputy Magistrate of Garbeta was taking much pains

to visit personally the villages under him and provide for the relief of the poor villagers, but that Babu Issan Chandra Mitra, Deputy Magistrate of the Jehanabad Subdivision of the Hugli district did not attend to it seriously. It may not be out of place to mention here that Birsingha and its neighbouring villages were at that time under the Hugli district, but were subsequently transferred under Midnapur in the time of Sir George Campbell.

Vidyasagar then hurried to the scene of occurrence, and was glad to find that his kind mother had already begun feeding the hungry people. She cooked the food with her own hands, and fed on an average one hundred persons daily. As was the son, so was the mother ! But Vidyasagar was not content with this. He opened feeding houses at his own cost for Birsingha and the surrounding villages. The number of hungry people increased every day ; from one hundred it finally rose to one thousand. As the number increased daily, Vidyasagar raised his scale of expenditure. On this occasion he wrote to his third brother, Sambhu Chandra, who had been charged with the management of the feeding houses, not to show stint of expenses on this account, however large the amount might be.

He had returned to Calcutta after completing all arrangements, but visited Birsingha often. Provisions were at first made for supplying the

hungry with *Khecharanna* every day ; but on the occasion of his second visit they applied to him for plain rice now and then. Vidyasagar granted their application and made provisions for the supply of plain rice with fish and curd once a week. But unfortunately on the very first day of this new arrangement, a sad incident occurred, which grieved the tender-hearted, benevolent reliever most seriously. A poor, hungry fellow in his eager desire for food, thrust a handful of the dry, plain rice into his mouth, which choked him to death. Vidyasagar took up the unfortunate man's corpse into his lap, and lamented bitterly that a fellow-creature should thus die a miserable death from want of food.

We have said that Babu Isan Chandra Mitra was a little indifferent at the outset. But subsequently he felt the severity of the situation, and visited the different villages under him, in company with Vidyasagar's second brother, Dinabandhu Nyayratna. He requested the Government for feeding camps, which were opened in some important villages, where the hungry were fed up to the month of October.

It is said, that Vidyasagar anointed the heads of the poor females of the lowest classes with his own hands, and thus set an example to his son, brothers and other relations, to emulate him in taking tender care of the poor sufferers. He also opened nurseries for the pregnant, hungry

females, and provided for their safe delivery and supply of milk to the new-born babies. The poor people in gratefulness changed his name from Vidyasagar to *Dayar Sagar* (an ocean of kindness). Gradually the number of the hungry rose to such a height that the 12 cooks engaged for preparing the food and the 20 men employed to distribute it felt quite used up with their work. As the hungry sat to their meals, they rent the air with repeated loud cheers for their "ocean of kindness." These people were fed by him up to the close of the year, when the new corn being ripe, they left the feeding camp one by one and returned to their respective houses, blessing with all their heart their benevolent protector, and praying to God for his long life.

He was not content with merely feeding the hungry people in his camp, but he visited the houses of his neighbours one after the other, and enquired after every one of them. The poor of the upper classes felt a great humiliation in resorting to the feeding camps. He helped them with money and articles of food, supplied at their houses. In fact, the unbounded kindness of Vidyasagar, who was by no means a man of money, put the great millionaires of the country to shame. Even the Government was obliged to acknowledge his generous bounty for the relief of the sufferers.

The Commissioner of the Burdwan Division wrote to him as follows :—

"To

"Pundit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar,
"Beetsingha

"Sir,

"I have been instructed by the Secretary to the Government of Bengal under order of the 20th instant to express to you the warm acknowledgment of Government for your generous exertions in relieving the poor during the recent scarcity in the Hoogly District.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient servant
(Sd.) "C. T. Montrisor

"Commissioner, Burdwan Division."

Vidyasagar's third brother, Sambhu Chandra, says :—

"In the meantime, Babu Hem Chandra Kar, Superintendent of the feeding Camp at Garbeta, and his brothers appealed to my eldest brother (Vidyasagar) for help. He sent through my hands 100 rupees,—50 rupees for food, and 50 rupees for cloth. Besides this, some gentlemen came to him praying for aid towards the celebration of the *Sradha* of their deceased parents. He gave to some of them 50, to some 100, and to the rest 200 rupees. A separate feeding camp was opened on the 28th Sraban, which was closed after the feeding on the 1st day of Paush. But the helpless poor of distant places stopped there up to the 8th

Paush. Consequently, about 60 feeble and helpless persons had to be fed for a few days more.'

CHAPTER XXV.

DISASTERS AND TROUBLES.

About the time, of which we are speaking, Vidyasagar had to encounter disasters and troubles of different kinds. He had to mourn over the loss of many of his sincere friends and co-adjutors.

The Hon'ble Sambhu Nath Pandit, the first native Judge of the Calcutta High Court, breathed his last on 6th January 1867. He was a friend and fellow-worker of Vidyasagar in many of his acts. He was an advocate of widow-marriage and female education. At the prize distribution of the Bethune School in 1865, when Vidyasagar presented a gold neck-lace, Sambhu Nath also gave a valuable prize of a pair of gold bracelets. Vidyasagar was deeply afflicted at the death of such a worthy friend.

In its train, followed the demise of Raja Radha Kanta Dev Bahadur, which sad catastrophe befell on the 13th April of the same year. The reader is aware that the Raja was an advocate of female education. Though he was against the re-marriage of Hindu widows and had petitioned the Government opposing the legislation, yet he cherished a fond regard for Vidyasagar on account of his attainments and spiritedness. Vidyasagar

also had a great esteem for the Raja, and was sincerely grieved at his death.

About this time, notices appeared in the Hindoo Patriot and some other papers for starting a Widow Marriage Fund for the clearance of Vidyasagar's heavy debts on that account, appealing to the general public to come forward to help Vidyasagar with liberal contributions. Vidyasagar knew nothing of this appeal, being absent from Calcutta at his native village, Birsingha. When he returned to the city and heard of what was being tried to do for him, he was extremely picqued, and at once contradicted the appeal in the columns of the Hindoo Patriot. Among other things he said, that though the sixty widow marriages consummated upto that day had actually cost 82,000 rupees, yet his debts on this account would not come up to half of the 45,000 rupees accounted for by the appellants, who had no knowledge of the real state of things. He also said that he was quite ignorant of this appeal, having never even entertained the remotest thought of ever calling upon the public to help him in this matter, that he would not have cared to protest against the measure, if the proposers of the movement had not made mention of his debts in this affair, and that he therefore requested the movers to keep back from their uncalled-for intrusion.

In July, 1867, Vidyasagar married his eldest daughter, Hemlata Devi, to Gopal Chandra Samaj-

pati of village Aismali in the Nuddea district. As Hemlata was a girl of accomplishments, so her husband was also a young man of very good attainments, and to Vidyasagar's mind.

Sometime after this, a great misfortune befell our noble hero. His greatest friend and co-adjutor, Ram Gopal Ghosh, expired at about 11-30 A. M. on the 21st January, 1868. The deceased was a great orator and staunch advocate of widow marriage. The loss of such a sincere friend gave our hero a great shock, and moved him to a flood of tears. Speaking of Ram Gopal Ghosh, the Hindoo Patriot of the 27th January of that year said :—"He was a warm advocate of widow marriage and assisted the noble cause with money as well as personal labour."

The Hon'ble C. E. Buckland, in his 'Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors' says :—"In politics, Babu Ram Gopal Ghose was a zealous and indefatigable reformer. He was a leading member of the British Indian Association, which was established in 1851, and took the most prominent part in every political movement of the day : such subjects as the admission of Natives into the Legislative Council of India and the Civil Service, the extension of reproductive public works, were agitated, largely at his instigation. It was he who first matured a plan and established a Society for political agitation in England, with the assistance of Mr. Adams. for the purpose of

drawing the attention of the British public to Indian questions.

"But, above all, Babu Ram Gopal was distinguished for his great oratorical powers. When the Government of Bengal, on 26th February 1864, desired to remove the burning *ghat* from Nimtolla, though he felt personally no religious scruples against the proposal, he identified himself with his orthodox countrymen and made an eloquent speech setting forth their grievances. His speeches on the renewal of the Charter Act of 1853, on the memorial of Sir Henry Hardinge, and on the administration of Lord Canning are also famous, the former being praised by the *Times* as "a masterpiece of oratory."

A little farther on, Buckland says:—"As a promoter of education, a patriot, a politician, a speaker, a social reformer, as a successful merchant, and in force of character, Babu Ram Gopal Ghose was one of the foremost men of his time: and did much for the advancement and enlightenment of Hindu Society."

In fact, when in the beginning of 1864, the announcement of the desire of Government to remove the burning *ghat* from Nimtala and to set up an engine crematorium outside the town was made public, a great excitement prevailed among the Hindu community, and Vidyasagar was determined to oppose the measure, which was so repulsive to the religious feelings of his countrymen. It

was at his goading instigation that Ram Gopal Ghosh delivered his eloquent speech at a meeting held in the Calcutta Town Hall for the purpose, which made the Government throw up the project. In this connection, the following story is current in the country.

When Vidyasagar heard of the measure projected by Government, he was very firmly resolved to thwart it. Many leading native gentlemen had also sided with Government. Vidyasagar saw that there was only one man who was competent to oppose it vigorously and effectively. That man was Ram Gopal Ghosh. Vidyasagar called on him and gave out his mind, but he, having no scruples of his own on that account, declined to interfere. Vidyasagar now set himself to think of some means whereby his friend could be persuaded to stand against the proposal. It suddenly struck him, that Ram Gopal was highly filial to his mother, and never disobeyed her. He decided upon persuading her to induce her son to take up the cause. Accordingly, early in the next morning, he again called and seated himself in the outer apartments of his friend's house. As Ram Gopal's mother returned from her bath in the Bhagirathi, she saw Vidyasagar seated alone with a very melancholy face, and asked him the cause. He replied.—'Madam, perhaps you are not aware that Government have resolved upon removing the burning *ghat* from Nimtala and setting

up an engine crematorium for the cremation of the dead bodies of the Hindus. The law on this subject is going to be passed very shortly.' The old lady was taken by surprise. She asked him if there was no means to prevent it. Vidyasagar said,—'There is only one means. To-morrow the matter will be decided at the Town Hall meeting. If your son should attend the meeting and speak against the measure, the legislation may be averted.' The matron replied,—'I will at once ask Ram Gopal to do so.' She went into the inner apartments and told her son to oppose the proposed legislation. Ram Gopal promised to obey. He then came out and said to Vidyasagar,—'O ! You have told mother. There is no help now ; I must obey my mother. Very good, come to-morrow at 3 P. M. ; I will attend the meeting.' On the next day, Ram Gopal, accompanied by his friend, went to the meeting and made a highly eloquent speech strongly opposing the proposed measure, which made the Government abandon the project.

Shortly after this, Vidyasagar had to encounter the loss of another great friend. Sarada Prasad Ray, a Zemindar of Chakdighi in the Burdwan district, died on the 18th March, 1868. The deceased had a great familiarity with Vidyasagar. He consulted the latter on all points. He had no issue of his own, and he, therefore, had a great mind to take an adopted son. But Vidyasagar prevented him from that step and advised him to establish chari-

table institutions and to do other useful works. Sarada Prasad acted up to this advice. In 1853, he opened a charitable dispensary, and on the 1st August, 1861, established a free school, both at Chakdighi. It was on a poor family of this village that Vidyasagar had settled a monthly allowance of fifteen rupees. A few years subsequent to the death of this Zemindar, there was a suit instituted with respect to his will. In this case, Vidyasagar had to appear in Court as a witness, of which hereafter.

Although Vidyasagar was heavily embarrassed with debts on account of his widow maraige movement, he never stinted his charities. We have already said, that he never refused a beggar or supplicant. He always contributed very liberally to the aid of such works, as in his opinion were useful to the country.

About the middle of 1868, some respectable residents of Ghatal in the Midnapore district appealed to him for aid towards the establishment of a High English School at Ghatal. Vidyasagar was a warm supporter of English education, and he very generously responded to the appeal. He contributed as donation the whole amount of 500 rupees which they wanted.

The reader may recollect the name of Rani Katyayani of Paikpara Raj, and how much indebted she was to Vidyasagar. The Rani was now grown too old. She breathed her last on the 17th day of August, 1868.

In the course of this year, appeared his *Akhyamanjari, Parts II and III.* The language of the two books is equally excellent and very well adapted to the purpose intended. Both of them are very nice school books.

Hara Chandra Ghosh, with whose name the reader is already acquainted, was one of the native judges of the Calcutta Small Cause Court. He died on the 3rd of December, 1869. He too was a staunch supporter of female education. A condolence meeting was held on the 4th January next when a Memorial Committee was formed to perpetuate his memory. Vidyasagar was on this committee.

In 1868, he had to enter into a very disagreeable family dispute. His second brother, Dinabandhu quite unexpectedly laid claim to a share of the Sanskrit Press and the attached Depository. He was so eager about it, as to be ready to bring the matter into Law-Court. When Vidyasagar saw, that his dear brother was zealously intent on going to court, he advised him to have the question settled out of court by arbitration. Dinabandhu assented. Accordingly, the Hon'ble Justice Dwarka Nath Mitter, the second native Judge of the Calcutta High-Court, and Babu Durga Mohan Das, one of the ablest pleaders of the bar of the said court, were chosen by them to be their arbiters. The two brothers then entered into an agreement executed on a one-rupee stamped paper binding themselves

to abide by the decision of the umpires. Their third brother, Sambhuchandra, cousin Pitambar Bandyopadhyay, who was the Printer of the Sanskrit Press, and Vidyasagar's friends, Raj Krishna and Shyama Charan, and Giris Chandra Vidyaratna were cited as witnesses. Vidyasagar had at this time two more brothers living, besides Dinabandhu, namely, the third Sambhuchandra, and the sixth Isan Chandra, the fourth, fifth, and seventh brothers having already died ; but they laid no claim to the property in dispute. It is said that for fear of appearing and deposing in the witness-box, Sambhuchandra requested his second brother to surrender his title. However that might be, Dinabandhu at last renounced his claim. On the 17th day of October, 1868, he submitted to the arbitrators a deed of relinquishment to the following effect : —

“ On the 11th October current, I filed an agreement and a plaint with a list of witnesses ; but I see that it is quite unjust to enter into dispute with a brother on account of a small property. I therefore hereby declare that I relinquish the claim that I laid to a share of the Sanskrit Press and the Book Depository attached to it. In future if I myself or my heirs should lay any claim to it, that shall be null and void. 17th October 1868.

Sd. “Dinabandhu Bandyopadhyay.”

The umpires passed the following judgment : —

“ The plaintiff, Dinabandhu Bandyopadhyay,

having filed an agreement relinquishing his title and claim to a share of the Sanskrit Press and the Book Depository connected with it, and having declared that any such claim in future either on his own part or on the part of his heirs should be considered null and void, further investigations and proceedings are unnecessary. In the presence of both parties, it is therefore,

‘Decreed

‘ That the plaintiff’s claim be dismissed and a copy of this judgment and decree be supplied to each party. 18th October 1868.

Sd. ‘Dwarka Nath Mitter

Sd. ‘Doorga Mohun Dass,’

When Dinabandhu first gave out his mind to lay his claim to the property, Vidyasagar expressed his willingness to divide it into six equal shares among the four living brothers and their parents ; but Dinabandhu would not be content with such a small share. It is said, that having failed in his attempts to substantiate his claim to the property, Dinabandhu was greatly displeased with his elder brother, and refused to receive monthly allowances from him. Vidyasagar saw the pecuniary* difficulties of his brother, and used to pay the money to his sister-in-law (brother’s wife), cautioning her, at the same time, not to let her husband know it. Vidyasagar was a lover of mankind ; he loved his brothers and relations very dearly, and always tried to make them happy. He had to spend a deal of

money on their account, but unfortunately they did not reciprocate the same feelings. He was often heard to say with tearful eyes, that like the old man of the fables, in trying to please everybody, he had been able to please nobody.

Long before this dispute, Dinabandhu one day requested his elder brother to recommend him to the Lieutenant-Governor for a Deputy Magistracy. Vidyasagar was in great difficulty as to how he should request the Governor for his own brother. He called on the latter several days, but could not give out his mind. At last, he said one day,—‘I have been trying for several days to request you for something, but bashfulness always stands in the way, and I cannot express my mind.’ The Governor was very curious to hear it. The more he pressed Vidyasagar for the request, the more he grew shy and could not give utterance to it, and on different pretexts left his friend’s august presence. When he called again the next week-day, the Governor said to him,—‘I will confine you to-day, unless you tell me your mind.’ Vidyasagar was now obliged to give out his brother’s prayer. The Lieutenant-Governor said,—‘Why have you been so much shy about it? Had you told me before, I could have given him one; there was a vacancy at Hugli. Very good, I will see if there is still a vacancy, and let you know ere long.’ In the next week’s Gazette appeared Dinabandhu’s appointment as a Deputy Magistrate; he was posted to Barisal.

About this time Vidyasagar was favourably disposed to Homœopathic mode of treatment. He had had a great aversion for it before. In 1866, the illustrious homœopathist, Dr. Berigni, had arrived at Calcutta. Doctor Rajendra Nath Datta of Bowbazar had already begun to learn the principles of Homœopathy. The two medical men, one a European and the other a native, being of the same turn of mind, formed an intimate friendship. The latter obtained great help from the former in the acquisition of his knowledge in the new mode of curing diseases, and soon rose to eminence. By this new method of treatment, doctor Rajendra Nath relieved Vidyasagar of his painful head-disease. The latter saw the wonderful curative properties of the homœopathic drugs in the case of his friend, Raj Krishna, who had had a great costiveness of the bowels. Enema had had to be injected at short intervals, and even then the bowels would move very slowly, and eject bolus-formed stony discharges; the rectum bled profusely. Allopathic and other modes of treatment had been tried for a long time, but without any effect. Such a painful, incurable disease doctor Rajendra Nath cured marvellously by his new method. These two reliefs convinced Vidyasagar of the superiority of the efficacy of Homœopathy over that of Allopathy. Besides, he saw that Homœopathic medicines were cheaper, and their application far easier. He therefore devoted him-

self to the study of the new science, and soon acquired a tolerable knowledge in it. He then began to treat simple cases himself according to this mode and experienced good results. He induced his second brother, Dinabandhu, to learn the new science and to relieve the sufferings of the diseased poor. It was he, who persuaded the famous Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar, the greatest Indian homœopathist of the day, to try the efficacy of the new medicines. Dr. Sarkar was an eminent allopathist and had had a great aversion for the new science. One day, when he and Vidyasagar called together to see the Hon'ble Justice Dwarka Nath Mitter, who was confined to bed through illness, their conversation turned to Homœopathy, and a great debate ensued between the two friends as to which of the sister sciences was superior. At last, Dr. Sarkar was obliged to say that he would no more condemn Homœopathy, but would try and see if there was anything in it. He was a great scientist and had good inquisitive faculties. He soon found out the superior curable properties of the new medicines, and became a staunch follower of Homœopathy. In a short time, he rose to great eminence, and surpassed in practice even Dr. Berigni, the founder of the homœopathic treatment in India, who had consequently to return home with an empty pocket.

About 6 or 7 years after this, Vidyasagar's youngest daughter was cured of a serious illness.

by homœopathic treatment. Allopathy had been tried for a long time, but without success. Vidyasagar thus grew more zealous to learn the new science perfectly. He knew that medical science could not be acquired thoroughly without a knowledge of Anatomy. He therefore purchased a set of human skeleton, which he subsequently presented to his friend, Raj Krishna's son. He procured many homœopathic works, which are still to be found in his Library. Besides these, his Library contains a collection of a good many valuable books all beautifully bound and nicely arranged. He never allowed anybody to take away any book from his Library. Babu Nilambar Mukharji once asked him for some historical works to compile a history of India; Vidyasagar would not lend him the books from his Library. He purchased a new set and presented it to Nilambar Babu.

Some say that formerly the friends and acquaintances of Vidyasagar had free access to his Library, and they were at liberty to take away books to their homes occasionally. But subsequently, his mistrust arose from the conduct of one of his so-called friends, which compelled him to withdraw his permission to remove books from his Library. The so-called friend, alluded to above, once borrowed a valuable Sanskrit work from Vidyasagar and took it to his own home. After a time, when Vidyasagar asked him to return the book, the unscrupulous fellow at once replied, that

he had returned it long since. The book was missing, and the owner was at a loss to account for its loss. It was a rare and valuable Sanskrit work procurable only in Germany. It was at that time out of print, and consequently there was no possibility of procuring a new one, until it was reprinted. Fortunately, in a few days, a hawker of books, whom Vidyasagar had known for some time, came to him with the very missing book to sell. Vidyasagar was quite surprised to find it in the possession of the hawker, and asked him where he had got it from. The innocent pedler replied, that he had purchased it from Babu (the name of the man who had borrowed the book from Vidyasagar's Library). Vidyasagar was startled to hear the name, but he said nothing, and purchased the book from the hawker, giving him the price he demanded. From this time forward he was determined not to lend his books to any body.

It is said, that on one occasion a wealthy man of the city called on him when he was in his Library. The visitor was quite amazed at the sight of the beautiful binding of the books, and remarked ;—‘ Sir, you must be crazed to spend so much money in getting these books bound from Europe ?’ Vidyasagar smiled, and after an interval of a few minutes said to the visitor ;—‘ Your shawl is very nice, indeed ; how much did it cost you ?’ The man quite forgetful of his own remarks and unconscious of Vidyasagar's tactics, replied most inno-

cently, that the shawl was of real Benares make, and cost him 500 rupees, and at the same time began admiring the qualities of the texture. Vidyasagar smiled and said :—‘Why have you spent so large an amount on this shawl, when an ordinary blanket might keep you equally warm ? What is the good of the valuable gold chain to fasten your watch with, when the purpose might be sufficiently served by a piece of strong thread ? You are no less crazed than myself.’ The visitor was dumb-founded, and could make no reply.

On his recovery from the injuries of his fall at Uttarpara, Vidyasagar first went to Chandernagore for a change, but the place being found to be uncongenial to his improvement, he left it for Burdwan. Burdwan was at that time one of the best sanitariums in Bengal. The dangerous Malaria, which subsequently ravaged it, had not then set in, and people from different quarters resorted to it for renovation of their damaged health. At Burdwan, he put up with Babu Pyari Chand Mitra, who was then the Serishtadar of the local Judge’s Court-office. Pyari Chand had married a sister of Vidyasagar’s intimate friend, Syama Charan. Although he took a second wife after the death of the first, his love for his former brother-in-law did not lessen. He often visited the latter’s house, as formerly during the life-time of his first wife. On one of these occasions, Syama Charan had introduced him to Vidyasagar, and the two had since formed a great friendship.

The people of Burdwan had already heard his name before, and some of them had known him on his previous visits. The poor and the needy gathered round him, and he gave away his alms to the supplicants without distinction of caste and creed. A good many Mussulmans are known to have been rescued by him from peril. During the period of his stay at Burdwan, he used at intervals to pay visits to Birsingha, and on those occasions, numerous poor and hungry children of the lower classes crowded about his palanquin. He gave alms to all of them ; to some of them he presented sweatmeats ; to some, pice and other coins ; and to others he gave clothes. Whenever Vidyasagar's intended visit to a place was reported, people of different classes, male, female and children, crowded in the streets he was to pass through, to catch a glimpse of the face of the renowned, kind and benevolent Vidyasagar. In this connection, we will take the liberty to relate here an incident of his former life.

As Inspector of Schools he had once an occasion to go to a village in the interior of the Hugli district to visit the school of that place. The local people had already heard his name, and were eager to get a sight of the great man. From ten o'clock in the morning, the houses near the school building began to be filled in with women. Every door, every window was crowded to suffocation. Those females who were rather advanced in age

took their stands on the roofs of the houses ; some of them even stood by the way side. Vidyasagar was a little late that day. It was past noon ; the sun shone very hot on the heads of the spectators, but they did not mind it ; they ~~were~~ too eagerly anxious to catch a glimpse of the illustrious hero. At last, they were relieved of their suspense by a cheerful cry of ' There comes Vidyasagar.' The school-boys sat in their places quietly ; the teachers looked to their dresses, and heaved a deep breath. Vidyasagar passed by the way, but the female spectators could not see him, that is, could not distinguish him from his companions. We have already said, that our hero had acquired very simple habits of life. He was clothed in plain *Dhuti* and *Chadar*, his usual dress. At length, one of the aged women ventured to advance forward, and ask the foremost of the company ;—' Where is Vidyasagar ? Is he not come ?' The man replied,—' Here is he of whom you speak,' pointing to Vidyasagar. The woman looked for a while at our hero's face with eyes dilated with wonder, and then said ;—' Ah ! Indeed ! Pooh ! To see this Uriya bearer with a coarse *Chadar* we have scorched ourselves to death ! He has neither a coach nor a watch, neither *Choga* nor *Chapkan* !' In fact, it was very difficult to distinguish him from ordinary poor people.

To resume the thread of our narrative. The reader has already been told that Vidyasagar was

at this time heavily embarrassed with debts. His letter published in the Hindoo Patriot, referred to above, showed that his debts amounted to something between 20 and 22 thousand rupees. To clear some of these debts, he asked for a loan from the estate of the munificent Maharani Swarnamayi of Cossimbazar. We have said before, that Vidyasagar was intimately connected with the Cossimbazar Raj family, and used to borrow monies from the estate now and then, which he repaid at convenience. On the 4th November, 1869, he addressed to Rajib Lochan Ray, the Maharani's Dewan, a long letter to the following effect :—

‘ You are aware that I have been encumbered with debts on account of the widow marriage movement, and I am clearing them by degrees. I owe somewhat heavy debts to two persons, who are unwilling to be paid off by instalments. They demand repayment of their entire amounts at a single instalment. I have no means, at present, to pay them off. I therefore ask the Maharani for a loan of 7,500 rupees. If she should be pleased to lend me the amount, I will execute a hand-note, agreeing to repay it in three years. I have not an iota of doubt that I shall be able to liquidate the debt. Otherwise I would not have asked for the loan. Without your help, there is no chance of my success in this affair. You may assist me freely. Do not think that if you should aid me in this matter, you will have to meet with

any inconvenience. I am not so much devoid of respect and worth that I should not care to liquidate the debt. So long as Raja Pratap Chandra Sinha was living, I borrowed from him now and then, and paid him off by instalments. For the present, I happen not to have so much familiarity with any of the rich men here, that I may ask him for a loan. If you had not been where you are, I would not have ventured to request the Maharani for the loan. You must, please, be kind enough to do your best for the success of my prayer. Otherwise I shall be put to great shame and humiliation. Please, consider this and do as you think proper. Unless I had been put to great inconvenience, I would not have vexed you and the Maharani. I want the money in the course of one month. If I am favoured with this debt, there will exist no necessity of awarding the regular annual grant-in-aid. I have received many benefits from the Maharani, which are always fresh in my memory. I shall show shortly that I appreciate her merits and that I bless her always.

‘I am somewhat better now. I shall be glad to hear your own welfare and that of the Rajdhani.’

The Maharani gave the loan as prayed for, and the debtor repaid it at the end of his promised three years. When he sent the money, Rajib Lochan had already been dead, and Vidyasagar remitted the money to the creditor herself with a covering letter to the following effect :—

' To Maharani Swarnamayi, C. I. E.

' MADAM,

' It is long since that on account of a pressing necessity for money, the late most generous Dewan Rajib Lochan Ray very kindly favoured me under the permission of the Maharani, with a loan of 7,500 rupees, on condition of being repaid at convenience without any interest on it.

' Words cannot express how much I was benefited by this loan. This benefit will remain ever fresh in my memory. The Maharani is born to do good to humanity. Undoubtedly there are plenty of wealthy persons in the country, but none of them has been able to win the sincere gratitude and heart-felt blessings of the general public.

' I was much ashamed that I could not repay the debt for a long time. I have now got an opportunity of clearing it. I beg to enclose herewith Currency Notes for 7,500 rupees. Please, accept the money and release me from the debt.

* * * *

' Yours &c.

Sd. ' Isvar Chandra Sarma.'

It was not from Maharani Swarnamayi alone that he took loans. He borrowed from many other wealthy persons of the time. On one occasion, he took a loan of 25,000 rupees from a female member of the Paikpara Raj family. In 1876, he acknowledged this debt in the course of his deposition in the Chakdighi Will Case.

These debts were incurred by him mostly on account of persons connected with widow marriage in the interior of the country. Vidyasagar himself admitted this in his letter to the Hindoo Patriot. Not only was he heavily embarrassed for them, but he had also to encounter difficulties of different sorts. In village Kumarganj under Thana Chandrakona in the Jehanabad Sub-Division of the Hugli District, there was once a very disagreeable friction between two parties, the one for, and the other against, widow marriage. Vidyasagar noted down in his own handwriting statements of the case. Some of these papers, which speak for themselves, are quoted below for the edification of the reader :—

(A)

“A portion of the inhabitants of Comerongge, Thannah Chundrakonah in the Sub-Division of Jehanabad have formed themselves into a party to support the cause of the marriage of widows. This party having come to know that their opponents in the village would not permit them either to join with them in the worship of the idol *Shiva* or to offer a separate pooja themselves on the occasion of the Churrukpooja and apprehending a breach of the peace if they followed the latter course petitioned the Deputy Magistrate on the 25th Chait last for the aid of the Police. The requisite order on the Daroga of the Thannah was passed and at the solicitation of the petitioners the Amlah

were directed to issue it on the same day, as the interval between that day and the date of the pooja was very short, namely 5 days. Enquiry was made at the Thannah every day whether the order in question had reached and a reply in the negative was invariably returned. On the 28th the applicants, being impatient for the arrival of the order, went again to Jehanabad, and the Deputy Magistrate being absent enquired of the Nazir about it and were told that the order had been duly despatched. They came back to the Thannah and learnt that it had not reached up to that time. * Despairing of any assistance from the Police they began to negotiate with the leaders of the opposite party and it was settled that the former would be allowed to offer their pooja separately without any molestation. Relying upon the faith of their opponents they went to the Temple on the 30th to make their pooja and were beaten back with great violence. They came to the Thannah to lodge a complaint, but the Moonshee, the Daroga being absent, paid no attention to them, used harsh words and referred them to the Deputy Magistrate. They accordingly went to Jehanabad and lodged their complaint before that officer who made it over to the Moonsiff of the station for trial. The case is still pending.

* "It has since been learnt from the Daroga that the order came to the Thannah after the 30th when the evil had already been done."

"The leaders of the opposite party observing the course taken by the widow marriage party became exasperated against them and waited upon the bonafide Zemindar of the village Baboo Shib Narain Roy who sent his men to apprehend and bring before him the men of the latter party. Those who were apprehended were at first severely beaten before the village community in all the public places of the village. They were next taken to the Zemindar, beaten again and fined and then dismissed on their promising to renounce all connection with the marriage of widows. Some of these men have returned to their homes, some have left them with their families, while others, afraid of the harsh treatment dealt out to their brethren in the cause, have followed the example of the latter and left their homes also.

"Two of the oppressed bolder than the rest repaired to Jehanabad and laid their complaint before the Deputy Magistrate, who for 4 days successively refused to take their petition.

It is notorious that Baboo Shib Narain Roy often calls on the Deputy Magistrate at an advanced hour of the night."

(B)

"You may have by this time received the note I sent through Jamadar. After he left, I was writing to the Mooktear of Jehanabad, while Damoo, Sriharee, Nilcomal and Gopal were with me. Sreenibass Doss and his brother of our party rush-

ed in and reported that the *Goallas* of the opposite party had severely beaten them. I told them to prepare to go to Jehanabad in order to lodge a complaint. They accordingly went home and the 4 others followed them. When about to enter their house, the *Goallas* beat Sreeneebass on the head with a *lattee*. The wound was deep and bleeding profuse and he fell senseless on the ground. His brother was also very severely beaten. Nilcomal's head has been fractured with a *lattee* and his side where there was a pain before was struck with 3 or 4 *lattees*. He lies insensible, frequently vomits, and does not open his eyes. His stomach is distended and his pulse fluttering and there is very little hope of his life. Another has also been very severely beaten on the head. Nemaee, Prem Chund and Satrooghun have each received 10 or 12 strokes of the *lattee*. On receiving the news of the affray I went to the spot and saw a stream of blood. I have reported the matter to the Daroga through the Farreedar and the Barkundaj especially appointed for the preservation of peace and I expect one of the officers of the Thannah by evening. Three of the *Goallas* have been apprehended and the rest have absconded."

(C)

"I have not yet succeeded in getting any more widows married. Nor do I expect to succeed at all, if things do not mend. Baboo Shib Narain Roy of Jurul has been oppressing with impunity

those of the Royots of his Talook Comergonge who belong to the widow marriage party. This news having reached the inhabitants of Pergonnas Burda and Chandrakona, those among them who are willing to marry their sons and daughters have fallen back, through fear of consequences. Shibnarain send, 10 or 12 Durwans to his Talook Comergunge with the order to bring before him forcibly, men of the widow-marriage party and while they are ushered into his presence, they are dismissed with 10 strokes of shoes and a fine of 10 Rs. each. He also exacts a promise from them that they would in future renounce all connection with widow marriage. Several of them have left the village with their respective families. If a complaint is laid before the Darogah and Moonshee they do not perform their duty but on the contrary ridicule and abuse the complainants. When a complaint is made before the Deputy Magistrate, he issues orders against the repetition of the oppression but no subordinate officer moves in the matter. I am intimate with a Police Amlah, who, on being hard pressed by me to explain this state of things, stated that he would do so on being assured that his name would not be made known. On my consenting to this condition he said you must not make any complaint before the Khan Bahadoor who has privately directed us not to render any assistance to the widow marriage party, but to endeavour to give them trouble if possible.

The party at Comergunge consisted of about 60 families, who with the exception of 4 or 5 families have been obliged to leave the party. If those, who joined the cause at my solicitation and are suffering from their act, are not relieved and if the oppressors are not punished, I must leave the world, for what is the good of my remaining in it when there is no chance of success of the cause. I have resolved to devote my existence to it and if it fails, life would have no charm to me and existence would be useless."

CHAPTER XXVI.

LABOUR OF LOVE IN BURDWAN.

We have said before, that latterly our hero had to seek healthy places for renovation of his impaired health, and that he generally resorted to Burdwan, which was one of the best sanitariums of the day. Vidyasagar had an old cook, by name Harakali Chaudhuri, who used to accompany his master in his sojourns. It is said, that one day, while at Burdwan, this Harakali reprehended a beggar woman, who had received alms from Vidyasagar in the shape of coins and cloth several times, for her impudence in coming to his master often for help. The kind-hearted Vidyasagar overheard this, and at once ordered retirement of the old servant on a monthly pension of two rupees. It is also said, that though the cook implored his master's

forgiveness, he did not forgive him, but insisted on his retirement.

The heroic Vidyasagar was broken down by ill-health ; he was enfeebled and reduced to a skeleton ; yet there was no cessation of his benevolent works. In 1869, the fatal Malarial Fever broke out in Burdwan. It had made its first appearance in the year 1825 at Mahammadpur, a large village in the Jessore district, which was devastated by its ravages. In the course of the next 44 years it had ravaged the greater part of the 24 Pergunnas and Nuddea districts. It then crossed the Bhagirathi and suddenly appeared in Hugli and Burdwan. The sufferings and hardships of the poor people were quite undescribable. There was no reckoning how many persons succumbed under the fatal disease. The news-papers of the time, particularly the Hindoo Patriot, appealed loudly to Government for help. No sooner did the fearful tidings reach his ears, than the tender-hearted, benevolent Vidyasagar was moved to compassion, and hastened to the field of action.

This time he did not put up with his friend, Pyari Chand Mitra, but took up his lodgings in a separate rented house, where he opened a charitable dispensary for the poor sufferers. He devoted himself to minister to them by nursing them and supplying them with medicines at their homes. In his travels round the city he witnessed the pitiful state of the suffering people, and saw numbers

dying from want of medical help. He heard that the Civil Surgeon in charge of the district had lent a cold ear to the pitiful cries of the poor. He informed Government of the terrible state of things. He was not content with mere writing. He returned to Calcutta and interviewed Sir William Grey, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal on the subject, and caused temporary hospitals to be opened in different parts of the infected area, under the charge of able medical officers. He also caused the apathetic Civil Surgeon of Burdwan to be removed, and a sympathetic man posted in his place. He then came back to Burdwan, and applied himself in right earnest to relieve the afflicted of their miseries. In his own private dispensary he made provisions not only for the supply of medicines and diet to the sufferers but also money in cash for the food of the convalescent and the unaffected poor, without distinction of caste or creed. He provided them also with clothes, which cost him nearly 2,000 rupees. He was moved to all these acts of benevolence not by any desire for a name or fame, but simply by the impulse of his naturally kind heart. Yet the Hindoo Patriot and other leading periodicals of the time spoke of him in highly complimentary terms and gave him loud cheers.

In this work of love and charity, he was greatly aided by doctor Ganga Naryan Mitra, a medical practitioner, nephew of Pyari Chand Mitra. Ganga Narayan was placed in sole charge of Vidyasagar's

dispensary. The fearful epidemic grew every day more and more serious and caused a great havoc among the people. The number of patients attending Vidyasagar's dispensary daily rose by leaps and bounds, as here they were supplied with food and pice, besides free medicine. Latterly, the number of patients rose so high, that Ganga Narayan asked his principal to be permitted to give Cinchona instead of pure Quinine, as the latter was much more costly than the former. But Vidyasagar did not approve of the plan. He said that the lives of the rich and the poor were equally valuable, and should be taken care of equally. He insisted on the use of Quinine, however costly it might be. He looked after the poor sufferers from hut to hut, and when he saw that the diseased was too feeble to walk to the dispensary, he made the medical officer attend the patient at his own hut, and he himself carried the medicine for him. He thus saved numbers of poor people from imminent death, who, but for his kind care and charities, would certainly have died.

We have said before, that Pyari Chand Mitra and our hero were intimate friends. On the former's death, the latter treated his family with the same tenderness and affection. Pyari Chand's first son, Babu Khetra Nath Mitra is at present a Munsiff, and his youngest son, Avinas Chandra Mitra, is Serishtadar of the Judge's Court at Burdwan. His son-in-law, Babu Giri Chandra

Basu, is the managing proprietor of the Bangabasi College at Calcutta. Vidyasagar loved Girish Chandra most dearly. The two families are still in very good terms of friendship.

Although Burdwan had lost its former salubrity of climate, it was all these attractions and his former love of the place that made Vidyasagar visit it now and then. The people of Burdwan knew him too well to forget him. Whenever he alighted at the platform of the Railway Station, the poor surrounded him on all sides, as they were sure to get from him something. On one of these occasions, a poor, ragged, little boy with a pale countenance approached our noble hero and begged him for a pice. The lad's fleshless body and wan face moved him to compassion. Besides, the sorrowful, pale countenance of the beggar boy had something of a peculiar illumination in it. Vidyasagar was a little curious about him, and began to talk with him in rather familiar tones. He said,—‘Suppose, I give you four pice.’ The boy did not know Vidyasagar personally, and he thought naturally that the man was jesting. He said,—‘No use of joke, sir ; kindly give me a pice.’ Our hero replied,—‘This is no joke ; if I do give you four pice, what would you do ?’ The boy said.—‘I would lay out two pice in buying something to eat, and give the other two pice to my mother.’ Vidyasagar then said,—‘And if I give you two annas ?’ The boy now thought, that the man was really making fun

of him, and was about to recede, when our hero caught hold of his arms, and said,—‘Now tell me the truth, what would you then do?’ The poor boy’s eyes were now full of tears, which trickled down his breast ; he said,—‘In that case, I should buy rice for four pice and give the rest to my mother, for that will defray our expenses for another day.’ Vidyasagar again asked him,—‘And if I give you four annas?’ The boy was still in the hold of our hero ; he had no means of escape, unless and until he answered the question. He therefore replied,—‘I would reserve two annas to cover our expenses for two days, and the other two annas I would lay out in purchasing mangoes. I shall sell them for four annas ; that will again defray our expenses for two days and serve me to have a capital of two annas, which I might lay out in dealing in mangoes, and thus manage to feed my mother and myself for some days.’ Vidyasagar was greatly touched by the tale, and gave him a rupee. The boy bounded away highly delighted. About two years after this, Vidyasagar again went to Burdwan. As he was about to enter the shop of a former acquaintance near the Station, a stout and strong boy advanced and saluted him, and then said,—‘Would you please, sir, come and take your seat in my shop.’ Vidyasagar was taken by surprise, and he asked the youth,—‘Who are you ; why should I go to your shop?’ The boy said with tears in

his eyes,—“About two years ago, I begged you for a pice ; you kindly gave me a rupee. Out of that rupee, I bought rice for two annas, and laid out the remaining fourteen annas in dealing in mangoes. I made a little profit by selling them. By degrees I had a small stock, and I have now turned a chapman of petty miscellaneous articles. Would you, please, come and have a look into my shop.” Vidyasagar then recollected the little incident of two years back. He blessed the youth and accompanied him to his shop, to his great satisfaction.

Even when so busily engaged in his labour of love at infected Burdwan, his own health completely broken down, he never forgot his literary work. Here he composed his *Bhranti-Vilasa*, compiled from Shakspeare’s “Comedy of Errors.” The language of the book is sweet, melodious, and humorous. What wonderful powers of translation did Vidyasagar possess. How beautifully he has clothed foreign language and ideas in his native dress, and made them peculiarly his own ! The plot of the Comedy of Errors is rather complex. In spite of this difficulty, he has so nicely narrated it in his *Bhranti-Vilas*, that the excellent humour displayed in the original has not lost its force in the translation. To say the truth, *Bhranti-Vilasa* is an excellent novel in Bengali. The readers of Lamb’s Tales of Shakspeare are well aware how difficult it is to turn a play

into a novel. This difficult task has been very nicely accomplished by Vidyasagar. He has displayed the same skilfulness of attractive expression in his compilation of the *Bhranti-Vilasa*, that he has displayed in compiling the *Sitar Vanavasa* from Bhababhuti's excellent drama, the "Uttara-Charita." If Vidyasagar had favoured us with some more translations of Shakspeare's plays, the Bengali language would surely have attained far greater improvement.

It is said, that Vidyasagar finished the composition of this book in 15 days, during which he wrote for a quarter of an hour every day before going to dinner. It must be said that fortunately for the country Vidyasagar gave up Mathematics as a dry subject, and applied himself to the study of Shakspeare with his friend, Ananda Krishna. If he had not done so, how could the readers of Bengali ever expect to get such an excellent translation of the great poet of the world? The same was the case with Macaulay. He also thought Mathematics dry and insipid, and paid greater attention to Literature. Had he not done so, most probably the world would have been deprived of his numerous excellent literary works. It may consequently be deduced that God opens to men of talents their ways of work according to their respective natural propensities.

The *Bhranti-Vilasa* was the last of his school-books. All such books that he wrote were printed

and published in his life-time, with the exception of two, the *Basudeva-Charita*, noticed before, and the *Ramer Rajyabhisheka* (Coronation of Rama). The last-named book was under print in 1869, and only six forms of it had been printed, when Vidyasagar was told that another book bearing the same name by Sasi Bhushan Chattopadhyay had already appeared. He, therefore, stopped the publication of his book. Sasi Bhushan once said to one of his friends :—"After my *Ramer Rajyabhisheka* had been published, Vidyasagar one day personally called at the Press where the book had been printed, and purchased a copy of it. I was not then present at the Press. When I came to the Press and heard of it, I at once ran to the Sanskrit Press Depository with a copy of my book. I met Vidyasagar there. I saluted him, and presented him with the copy. He smiled, and said ;—"I have already bought a copy of your book. Very good, I accept your present. The book has been nicely got up' "

The six forms already printed show that the language of Vidyasagar's book is more concise and refined. The same beautiful language, the same vigorous flow of style, and the same nice arrangement of thoughts and expressions are found here as in his "Sitar Vanabasa." Of course, it must be admitted that the Bengali language has now-a-days taken a different course ; but there was a time, when Vidyasagar's language was the

best-model—when writers of Bengali imitated his style.

Pyari Chand Mitra, under the pseudonym of Tek Chand Thakur, wrote his books in an easy, provincial style, and tried to turn the course of the Bengali language into a different channel ; but he failed to leave a standing land-mark for the succeeding generation of authors to follow. It was the talented writer Bankim Chandra Chatarji that succeeded in giving the Bengali language a new shape, which he formed by a combination of the styles of Vidyasagar and Tek Chand. As the chemical combination of two substances of different attributes produces quite a new substance, so by the combination of the two different styles of Vidyasagar and Tek Chand, Bankim Chandra has given birth to a new style. At the present time, this style is imitated in most cases, though endeavours are being made in some quarters to give it a still newer shape, by casting it in Bankim Chandra's mould, but, at the same time, adding to it something more. The language of the Tagores of the present day might be mentioned by way of illustration. The Bengali language is, no doubt, under change, and there is no certainty what form it will ultimately take ; but whatever shape it may take, it will always recall Vidyasagar with sentiments of profound veneration, and the writers of Bengali will ever be under a deep debt of obligation to him and pay homage to his feet, in

as much as the Bengali language, however newly shaped, must bear some shade of the elegance and beauty of the great writer's style.

The Bengali language has its origin in Sanskrit. As a matter of consequence, the inflexion of gender and other changes are formed in accordance with the rules of the mother tongue. But in most cases, the practice is at present being deviated from. Bankim Chandra's language shows that in some cases he has strictly followed Sanskrit in the inflexion of his words, while in others he has quite deviated from it. This deviation is almost general with most of the authors of the present day, with the honourable exception of the very able and thoughtful writer, Kali Prasanna Ghosh of Dacca. Some are still of opinion, that Bengali should follow its mother language in the inflexion of gender and other changes, and a deviation from it would make it incorrect. In the correct use of the inflexions, Kali Prasanna Ghosh has no equal. But the modern writers of Bengal do not like to bind themselves to follow Sanskrit in every respect. In fine, the Bengali language, like the English, is under change. But we must repeat again, that however alteration it might undergo in shape, beauty, or melody, it must always remain deeply indebted to Vidyasagar. It will not be an easy thing to discard him altogether ; his frame-work must unavoidably be taken up.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DESERTION OF ANCESTRAL HOME.

In March 1869, Vidyasagar's house at Birsingha with everything in it was destroyed by fire. His mother and second brother were in sound sleep at the time, but most fortunately they escaped from the fire and not a single life was lost. No sooner did the news of the sad accident reach Vidyasagar, than he hastened to Birsingha and made provisions for the re-erection of the house. He wanted to take away his mother with him to Calcutta, but she declined on the ostensible plea that without her, there would be nobody to look after the comfort of the school-boys, whom Vidyasagar had been giving food and shelter, and after her poor neighbours.

In the same year, he published a correct edition of the Sanskrit *Megha-Duta* with Mallinatha's annotations.

We now come to a most painful scene—the desertion of his ancestral home. The main cause of this abandonment is attributed to a sad incident in connection with widow marriage. One Muchiram Bandyopadhyay of Khirpai, Head Pandit of the Kenchkapur School, had settled to take to his wife a Brahman widow named Manomohini of Kasiganja. He came to Vidyasagar and implored his help in the affair. Vidyasagar at once proceeded to Birsingha to celebrate the marriage.

But the Haldars of Khirpai, a respectable body, accompanied with some advocates of widow marriage, called upon Vidyasagar, and entreated him most earnestly to prevent the alliance. The father of the widow marriage movement was so moved by their urgent entreaties, that he promised to them that he would not allow the marriage to be consummated, and told them that they might take away with them the bride and bridegroom, who had been already brought to Birsingha for the alliance. The Haldars were satisfied at the word given by the truthful Vidyasagar, and they went their way. But in the dead of the very night, his second brother, Dinabandhu, and third brother, Sambhu Chandra, with the help of some other villagers, celebrated the marriage, without the knowledge of their eldest brother. Early in the next morning, as he was sitting in his verandah smoking his hookah, he heard a conch sounded.* The sound took him by surprise, but he could make neither head nor tail of it. At this moment, Gopinath Sinha, a respectable co-villager made his appearance. Vidyasagar asked him the cause of the sounding of the shell. The visitor replied—'You are not aware? Muchiram's marriage has been consummated.' At the news, his face was flushed

* The sounding of a conch indicates the conclusion of the performance of the rites of marriage or some such ceremonial or festival.

with rage. He spoke not a word, but began incessant inhaling and exhaling of tobacco smoke. This was an indication of his serious displeasure. He had some peculiar modes of signifying his inward rage. His unusual reserve with gravity of countenance, and respectful addresses applied to his inferiors, signified that he had found cause of displeasure. After a long silence, he asked Gopinath Sinha whether he knew anything of the affair. Gopinath swore by his feet that he was quite ignorant of it. At length, Vidyasagar said,— ‘I gave word to those gentlemen, but I have failed to keep my word. I therefore quit Birsingha once for all. I shall never more come here.’ The truthful Vidyasagar, though the father of the widow marriage movement, was so grieved at the breach of his promise, that he deserted his fatherland for good, never more to return to it. Although he kept his word and never more visited Birsingha personally, he could not efface it wholly from his mind. The very recollection of his early scenes often drew tears from his eyes. The monthly stipends, that he had settled upon his relations and other poor families of the village, and the expenses of the charitable institutions, that he had established there, he paid regularly up to the end of his life. It is said, that some 20 years after this sad incident, one day he received by post a pamphlet in Bengali, styled “Birsingha Jananir Patra” (*i. e.*, a letter from mother Birsingha). The

pitiful appeals of the paper moved him to a flood of tears, and he resolved to pay a visit to Bir-singha, if it was only for once. Accordingly he gave orders for repairs to his house, but ill-health prevented him from carrying out his plan. His illness grew serious, which ultimately carried him off this wicked world, and thus saved him from committing a breach of promise.

In August 1869, he made a gift of the Sanskrit Press Depository to Braja Nath Mukhopadhyay of Krishnagar. He had been highly dissatisfied with the working and conduct of his officials. As he was sitting one day surrounded by some of his friends and dependents, in course of conversation, he expressed a desire to give away his Depository to any body, who should come forward to receive the gift. Braja Nath, who was one of the company, said that he was prepared to receive the gift, if the donor should gladly and voluntarily give it to him. Vidyasagar at once made him the gift. It is said, that on the next day, some people offered him 10,000 rupees for the property, but he declined the offers, saying that when he had once given his word, he could not retract it even for a *crore* of rupees.

At 3⁰ O'clock in the afternoon of the 20th February, 1870, Durga Charan Banarji breathed his last. He was one of the best friends of Vidyasagar. He was exceedingly generous and benevolent. He was a great help to our hero in re-

lieving the sufferings of the diseased poor. It is needless to say, that the tender-hearted Vidyasagar was heartily grieved at the loss of such a sincere, intimate friend and co-operator. The two were so intimately connected, that as Durga Charan helped Vidyasagar in many of his works of love and benevolence, so the latter aided him with all his heart and soul in all his difficulties. Some time before his death, his eldest son, the Hon'ble Surendra Nath Banarji, the greatest Indian orator of the day, had passed the Competitive Civil Service Examination in England in the year 1869, but the Medical Board had disqualified him as having gone beyond the restriction of the limit of age. Surendra Nath wired to his father of the difficulty, and Durga Charan implored Vidyasagar's assistance in the matter. The latter, in his turn, consulted his friend, Dwarka Nath Mitter, and sent Surendra Nath's horoscope to England, which settled the question of age. Surendra Nath was declared an Indian Civil servant, but his father had not the good luck to hear the glad tidings, as it reached India shortly after his death. Vidyasagar was often seen to shed tears at the mention of Durga Charan's name. Subsequently when Surendra Nath was dismissed the Civil Service, Vidyasagar made him a professor of his own College.

Durga Charan's family were indebted to Vidyasagar on many accounts. After his death,

his wife and children entered into a serious quarrel about his assets, and went to law-court for the settlement of the dispute. Vidyasagar stood up as an umpire and settled the question out of court. Not only was he a man of great learning and kindness of heart, but he was also the possessor of good business capacities. He had a great tact of settling disputes. Whenever there was a quarrel in a rich family, he was invited to settle it. On the death of Babu Asutosh Dev, generally known by the name of Chhatu Babu, son of the renowned Ram Dulal Sarkar, the self-made great millionaire of Calcutta, when the state of his affairs ran into disorder, Vidyasagar was entrusted with their management. He made his best exertions to settle the matter without asking for any remuneration, but he was so displeased at the conduct of the relations and officers of the deceased, that he was constrained to give over the charge of his own accord.

Vidyasagar had three sincere friends among men of the medical profession, who were his great helps in most of his works of benevolence, namely Durga Charan Banarji, Nil Madhav Mukharji, and Mahendra Lal Sarkar. He had an irrevocable loss in the death of the first two, Nil Madhav having died some time before Durga Charan. He had only one left to him—Dr. Mahendra Lal, who is now on the 'top of the temple of fame in his profession. In 1870, Vidyasagar

contributed one thousand rupees to the aid of Mahendra Lal's Science Association. But latterly the two had a great difference. It is said, that it originated on the occasion of the illness of Vidyasagar's youngest daughter. Vidyasagar wrote to the Doctor requesting his attendance to the girl; but the latter put aside the letter without opening it at the moment. After the lapse of several hours, he opened the note and called. When Vidyasagar heard from him the cause of his unusual delay in attending to such a serious case, he was deeply pained and a little offended. Thus originated the difference, which ultimately grew so serious, that the two hardly met, and if ever they met by accident, their four eyes never met. They met only again for the last few days of Vidyasagar's life, when Mahendra Lal willingly forgot the difference and called to see the great man in his sick-bed.

In the year 1874, Vidyasagar lost one of his greatest friends and supporters in the demise of Maharaja Mahatap Chand Bahadur of Burdwan. He was a staunch advocate of all of Vidyasagar's movements.

About this time, he displayed a noble heroism which showed to the world that he was no hypocrite. Some people had been insinuating that Vidyasagar was a double shuffler—that he, who was the father of the widow marriage movement and was forward to consummate such alliance in

others, had not yet given any member of his own family in such marriage—had not yet shown to the world that “example is better than precept.” But every candid man, who knew Vidyasagar personally, must admit that he had no duplicity, in him. It is true that his opinions and convictions in many cases, particularly in matters of social reform, were wrongly formed, but there can be no doubt that he always acted up to those ideas and beliefs with sincerity. That he had not so long given any member of his family in widow marriage was because he had not had an opportunity for it. What could he do? He and his brothers had already been married; he could not make either himself or any of his brothers lose his wife. He could neither make his married daughter a widow, in order to be able to give her in remarriage—to set an example to the public. No sooner had he this opportunity than he availed of it with most eager promptness. He gave his only son in widow marriage.

On Thursday, the 11th of August, 1870, Narayan Chandra was married to Bhava Sundari Devi, a widowed daughter of Sambhu Chandra Mukhopadhyay of Khanakul Krishnanagar. The bride's age at that time was 16 years. Some time after the death of her first husband, her mother took her away to Birsingha, and there requested Vidyasagar's third brother, Sambhu Chandra, to give her widowed daughter in re-marriage.

Sambhu Chandra wrote to Vidyasagar, who thereupon settled a bridegroom for the girl. In the meantime, Narayan Chandra, who was at home then, fell in love with the fair girl, and expressed a desire to marry her himself. Information of this proposal was sent to Vidyasagar, and he received the news with utmost delight and rejoicing. He sent for the bride and bridegroom, and when they arrived, he performed the ceremony with great eclat. The marriage was celebrated in the house of Kali Charan Ghosh of Mirzapore in Calcutta. Narayan Chandra was, at this time, aged 21 years. Vidyasagar had not fetched his wife at the nuptials, for fear lest she should stand in the way and prevent the alliance. All the members of his family, particularly his brother Sambhu Chandra, were against the union. Before the celebration of the marriage, Narayan Chandra had said to his father ;—‘ Sir, I have no such merit, whereby I could add to the glory of your name. I know full well that your life-long aim is to relieve the miseries of virgin widows by giving them away in re-marriage ; in the achievement of that aim you have the chiefest pleasure. That lies in the power of this unworthy son. I shall never turn my back to that. If I can thereby contribute my small mite to minister to your pleasure of heart, I shall consider myself most fortunate ; and your opponents will then have no cause to cast innuendoes at your honest, bene-

volent intentions.' It is needless to say, that Vidyasagar's heart bounded with delight to hear his son speak in this strain.

We have already said, that Narayan Chandra's mother was not present at the nuptials. Vidyasagar was afraid, that she would oppose the marriage. It was this fear which led him to provide for a separate rented house for the accomodation of the married couple. But Narayan Chandra said to us that she had had no objection to the alliance, and she declared it openly after the marriage. The truth of Narayan Chandra's saying is evident from the fact that when she came down to Calcutta, she lived in the same mess with her son and his wife. She was quite illiterate and a devout follower of the orthodox Hindu faith, and yet it was her love for her husband and dear child, that made her live with them in the same mess and look to their comfort. It may not be out of place to mention here, that Vidyasagar's father, Thakurdas, was opposed to female education, and he had not allowed his daughters-in-law to learn to read and write.

That Sambhu Chandra was quite against this marriage and had written to his brother to prevent the union, is evident from the letter, which Vidyasagar addressed to him after the celebration of the marriage. The letter was in Bengali; we will try to give its purport here in English.

'My dear brother,

' On Thursday, the 27th Sravan, Narayan

Chandra was married to Bhava Sundari. Communicate the news to my dear mother and others.

"You wrote to say, that if Narayan Chandra married a widow, our kinsfolk and relations would not eat with us and would have no intercourse with us. On this point I have only to say that Narayan Chandra has entered into this alliance out of his own motion, and not at my instance. When I heard that he was determined on marrying a widow and that his bride was also come, what could I do but gladly approve of it ; I ought not to have opposed it. I am the originator of the widow marriage movement ; we have already given many widows in marriage. Under such circumstances, if my son had taken to wife an unmarried girl instead of a widow, I could not have appeared in public ; I would have been an object of hatred and aversion in higher society. By entering into this alliance of his own accord, he has added to the glory of my name ; he has made himself worthy to call me his father. I consider the inauguration of widow marriage into Hindu Society the most virtuous deed of my life. I don't think I shall be able to do anything more pious in this life. For the furtherance of this cause I have given my last pice, and if necessity arises, I am prepared to sacrifice my life. In comparison to this, the severance by our kinsfolk and relations of their intercourse with us is of very little consequence. Had I, on this consideration,

prevented my son from contracting widow marriage, which he did from the impulse of his own heart, I would have been the basest of men. In fine, I consider myself fortunate that Narayan Chandra entered into this alliance out of his own motion. I am not a slave to the customs of my country. Whatever I may deem proper or necessary for the good of the country or myself I will do at all risks. I will never shrink from it for fear of society or of my kinsfolk. In conclusion, I have to say that those, who will not have the courage or will dislike to keep festal or other intercourse with Narayan Chandra for fear of society or for any other reason, may easily refrain from such communication. I don't think, Narayan Chandra will be sorry on that account; and as for me, I too will not be offended or displeased. In my opinion, in these matters every one is at liberty to act according to his or her own free will; no one should follow our instance or act up to our wishes. 31st Sravan.

‘Your well-wisher

(Sd). ‘Isvar Chandra Sarma.’

The letter clearly shows that Vidyasagar was no double-dealer. His advocacy of the re-marriage of Hindu widows was sincere, though it must be said that his conviction was based on wrong arguments. The Hindu Society has nothing to fear from men like Ram Mohan Ray or Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, who never concealed their

real motives under false disguises. There is every fear of danger from those hypocrites, who proclaim themselves true Hindus in public but act quite the contrary in their private life. These non-Hindus are a pest to Society, and the sooner they are shorn off their false guise, the better for the country. A covert foe is more dangerous than a declared enemy.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LOSS OF MOTHER.

In the month of August, 1870, Vidyasagar's mother set out on pilgrimage. First of all, she went to the holy shrine of Benares to see her husband. After a short stay there, she again proceeded on her journey, and after travelling in the different shrines of India, she again came back to Benares. She requested her husband to accompany her to Birsingha. But he declined, and pressed her to live with him in Benares. The benevolent matron replied ;—'Let us go home now ; you have still some years to live.' My poor neighbours will miss me very keenly. My first duty is to succour the distressed and 'feed the hungry. I must go to do that now. But know this for certain, that wherever I may remain, I will come here in time, and die before you.' The prediction of this honest, faithful woman was

fulfilled to the letter. It is generally found that honest, virtuous, and religious persons foresee the dissolution of their life in distant future and sometimes predict the exact day and hour of their death. We do not see how they are enabled to do so, but nevertheless it is a fact and quite inexplicable. How inscrutable are the ways of Providence !

Vidyasagar's mother left her husband to live in Benares, she herself returning to Birsingha. In February following (1871), information reached Vidyasagar that his father was seriously ill at the sanctum. He at once proceeded to Benares, and was soon joined by his mother and his second and third brothers. In a few days, Thakurdas recovered from his illness. Vidyasagar returned to Calcutta, leaving his mother and brothers to look after his father. Bhagavati Devi lived with her husband for two months, and on the last day of the Bengali year (which is a sacred day with the Hindus), she was seized with Cholera, and expired in a few hours at the feet of her husband, as she had predicted. Before her death, she had begged for the blessings of her husband, whereupon Thakurdas said :—'How shall I bless you ? You are a most pious woman ; it is your own piety that takes you away before me : yours is the victory.' It is needless to say, that he was deeply grieved at the loss of such a virtuous wife.

On his return from Benares, Vidyasagar had taken his lodgings in a rented house by the river-side at Kasipore, a little north to Calcutta, when the sad intelligence reached him. The news came upon him like a thunder-bolt. How shall we describe the intensity of his grief? Words are too inadequate to express the sufferings of his heart. He was quite disconsolate, and wept bitterly like a child. The reader is aware how devotedly attached he was to his mother. Alas ! that mother, to obey whose word he had encountered the perils of a long pedestrian journey amidst thunder-storms and rains, and had plunged into the impassable stream of the terrific Damodar, was no more ! Oh ! the pangs of his heart—the more so, as he had not been able to attend to her death-bed and to have a last look of her face !

He performed the Sraddha ceremonials on the shores of the Bhagirathi at Kasipore ; after which he led a secluded life for several months together , during which time his main business was to shed incessant tears at his dear mother's memory. He observed the mourning rites in accordance with the tenets of the Sastras for one complete year. These twelve months he led the rigidly ascetic life of a true Hindu ; he gave up fish and meat ; he ate only one meal a day, and that composed of only rice and vegetables and cooked with his own hands, permitting nobody to help him in preparing the food save his wife, Dinamayi Devi, and

that very rarely, only on occasions of his illness, when he was too weak to do the cooking himself ; he gave up wearing shoes ; he did not use umbrella ; he slept on a rug on the floor ; in short, he renounced all luxuries and comforts of life. He did not visit Benares, the scene of her last days, for two years after the mournful incident.

In November 1873, Thakurdas was again ill. No sooner did the news reach Vidyasagar, than he hurried to Benares. He nursed his father most tenderly, who recovered in a fortnight. Every morning he walked about the holy city with a purseful of silver coins of all values, which he gave away in alms to the poor and the needy. He had a great aversion for the Bengali Brahmans of Benares ; but he had a very high opinion of the Mahratta Brahmans, whom he treated with much respect. He even washed their feet with his own hands. Whenever he had an occasion for feeding Brahmans, it was the Brahmans of Mahratta whom he entertained most sumptuously. He never feasted those of his own country. His main duty in Benares was to do the marketing and cooking for his father with his own hands, and to eat the *Prasad* (the remains of a meal) left by his parent. The reader is aware that in his early years want made him do all the cooking himself. He had thus acquired a great proficiency in the art of preparing food. Not only did he cook his father's meal, but he took a great delight in feeding people

with food of his own cooking. This self-imposed task was very agreeable to him.

During this sojourn at the sacred place of the Hindus, a gentleman one day called at Thakurdas's lodgings. Both the father and the son were present then. Vidyasagar thought that the new-comer was his father's acquaintance, while Thakurdas thought that the visitor must be known to his son. In the meantime, a piece of business called Vidyasagar away. When he returned to the lodgings, he found that the visitor had departed. He then enquired of his father about the man's personality. Thakurdas said,—‘I don't know him. I believed that he was known to you, and that you would come back and talk to him. I myself was too deeply engaged on an important matter to attend to him.’ Everything was now clear to Vidyasagar, and he was deeply sorry for what had passed. He at once set out in the direction of *Bangalitola* (that quarter of Benares where the Bengalis reside) to find out the unknown visitor. After a diligent search of some time, he at last discovered the man. He apologised to the stranger for the apparent slight shown to him ; the man was satisfied. Vidyasagar then asked him why he had called. The stranger replied,—‘I heard that you were come, and therefore called to see you. Besides, I wanted to ask you a question about religion.’ Vidyasagar desired him to put his question. The gentleman wanted to know our hero's

religious faith. Vidyasagar replied,—‘ I have never declared to anybody my faith, nor will I ever declare it ; but this much I can say, that if you believe that the bath in the Bhagirathi purifies you and the worship of *Siva* brings sanctity to your heart, there is your religion.’ With this, he returned to his own quarters.

On a previous occasion, while his mother was still living, the Brahmans of Benares asked him whether he believed in *Visvesvara* (the god Siva of Benares). Vidyasagar replied,—‘ I have no faith in *your* Visvesvara.’ The Brahmans were highly offended at such a reply from a Hindu, and asked him,—‘ What do you believe in then ?’ Vidyasagar answered,—‘ *My* Visvesvara and Annapurna (another name of goddess Durga, Siva’s wife) are my *father and mother*, present here in flesh.’ Here was some indication of his religious faith. It might not be much amiss to infer, that his feeding of Brahmans was for the satisfaction of his parents, who were his sole objects of worship.

The Hindu Wills Act was passed on the 1st September, 1870. The Draft Bill had been introduced into the Legislative Council in the previous year. The purposes of this Law had hitherto been served by the Indian Succession Act, which operated equally on the Indians and non-Indians. Previously, since the establishment of the Supreme Court, the wealthy residents of Calcutta used to leave their testamentary Wills at their own option,

which gave rise to serious litigations, consequent on frauds with respect to the deeds. Thus arose the necessity for a fresh legislation to prevent these evil practices. The Bill, introduced in 1869, was framed by the alteration of some of the sections of the Indian Succession Act. The movement caused a great agitation throughout the country.

The Government asked for the opinions of all the influential, leading members of Society and some of the Sastric Pandits. Vidyasagar was also called upon to give his opinion. He bestowed his best thoughts on the subject, and opposed two points: first, according to the Hindu Sastras, the gift of something to an unborn person is unlawful—both the donor and the donee of a gift must be cognisant of it; but in this Act, such gifts have been considered lawful in certain cases: secondly, what has been termed as Rules against Perpetuity is also opposed to the Hindu Sastras. Vidyasagar's arguments were founded on sound bases. But the Government paid no heed to them, and the Bill was passed into a law applicable to the Hindus, including Buddhists and Jains.

In the course of this year, Vidyasagar had to encounter another serious calamity in the death of Maharaja Satis Chandra Ray Bahadur of Nuddea, who breathed his last on the 25th day of October, 1870. Vidyasagar was intimately connected with the Nuddea Raj family. He had a friendly intercourse with Satis Chandra's father, Maharaja Sri

Chandra. The acquaintance first began when Vidyasagar had gone to the Nuddea palace for the manuscript of Bharat Chandra's works, and it gradually grew into familiar friendship in the course of his subsequent visits to Krishnagar for inspection of schools, while he was an Inspector of Schools. Sris Chandra had such a high regard for him on account of his vast erudition and noble conduct, that whenever Vidyasagar called on him, he rose from his throne, and clasped the poorly dressed visitor in his arms. In fact, he was so enamoured of our hero, that he supported his widow marriage movement and even subscribed his own name to the petition submitted to Government for legislation on the subject. We have already noticed briefly, in the chapter on Widow Marriage, how one of his ancestors, Maharaja Krishna Chandra, had baffled the attempts of Raja Rajaballabh of Dacca to introduce widow marriage into Hindu Society. But the descendant of the same Krishna Chandra felt no compunction in advocating the uncanonical renovation and lending his aid to the furtherance of the cause, though highly injurious to society and repugnant to orthodox Hindu feelings—he was so charmed and led away by Vidyasagar's arguments and by his own Western education. Sris Chandra died on the very day that the first widow marriage of his namesake under the new Law was celebrated with eclat in Calcutta,

His son, Satis Chandra, looked upon Vidyasagar with the same regard and esteem as his father. The reader is aware how our noble hero made over to him 1800 rupees deposited by his father in Vidyasagar's care. Even after Satis Chandra's death, Vidyasagar often visited Krishnagar to provide for the proper management of the Nuddea Raj Estate at great personal sacrifice. It was quite natural for our grateful hero to suffer losses for the good of a benefactor's descendants and heirs, from whom he had himself received so much benefit.

With respect to Vidyasagar's grateful benevolence and kindness to the near relations of a deceased friend and benefactor, Jogendra Nath Bandyopadhyay, mentioned before, has tried to condemn the conduct of our hero in connection with the family of his father-in-law Madan Mohan Tarkalankar. We would ask the reader to recall the circumstances under which our hero acquired the sole right of the Sanskrit Press and the copy-right of the three parts of Madan Mohan's *Sisu-Siksha*. On the death of Tarkalankar, when his family were miserably circumstanced, Vidyasagar very kindly settled on the deceased friend's mother, wife and widowed daughters a monthly allowance of ten rupees each. But that stipend was not sufficient for their comfortable living. Madan Mohan's son-in-law, Jogendra Nath aforesaid, therefore begged Vidyasagar for the copy-right of the three parts

of *Sisu-Siksha* in the name of Kunda Mala, Tarkalankar's second widowed daughter. Vidyasagar accepted the proposal and consented to make her a present of the copy-right. But subsequently he was so offended at somebody's behaviour, that he was constrained to withdraw his promise. Surely, this unusual conduct on the part of the truthful Vidyasagar is by no means to be justified, and has brought down some discredit on his unsoiled character. However offensive other people's behaviour might have been, or under any circumstances, however displeasing, Vidyasagar ought not to have retracted his word of gift, once pledged by him.

To resume the thread of our narrative. Maharaja Satis Chandra had married two wives. He had left a Will. One of the provisions of the testament was that if neither of his wives had any male issue, then on his demise, the younger widowed Maharani should take an adopted son, and that if she did not take to that course, the elder Maharani should adopt a son. The elder one had already died in the life-time of Satis Chandra. On his demise, the younger Maharani, Bhuvaneshvari, expressed a wish to keep the Estate in her own hands. The Raj-Dewan, Kartik Chandra Ray, saw that the Estate was already in an embarrassed state, and that if the Maharani should keep it in her own hands, it would grow more deplorable still. He, therefore, called on Vidyasagar, and consulted

him on the point. The latter decided upon placing the Estate in the hands of the Court of Wards. Kartik Chandra thereupon requested him to persuade the Maharani to take that course. Vidyasagar did as he was desired. He went to Krishnagar and waited upon Bhuvaneshvari. After much persuasion, he succeeded in convincing her of the advisability of the step. The Estate was accordingly made over to the Court of Wards on the 6th January, 1871. It soon prospered under the able management of the Court ; all its former debts were cleared off. The present Maharaja Kshitis Chandra Ray Bahadur, when he attained his majority and took over charge of the Estate in his own hands, received from the Court of Wards, a sum of two *laks* and ten thousand rupees in ready money. Kshitis Chandra had been placed in the Wards' Institution, where he received his training.

In 1871, Vidyasagar published new editions of the Sanskrit "Uttara-Charita" and "Abhijnana-Sakuntala" with his annotations. The two pre-faces of these publications are very good pieces of Bengali prose reading, displaying his powers of the same sweet, serious language, the same melodious flow of elegant style, as in his former works, and discussing concisely, in a short compass, the high talents and abilities of the two immortal poets, Bhavabhuti and Kalidas.

Besides these two publications, he issued correct

editions of the Sanskrit "Sisupala-Badha," "Kadambari," "Kiratarjjuniya," "Raghu-Vansa," and "Harsha-Charita," without annotations. He also published, for the students of the lower forms, three Selection-books from standard English authors, namely, "Selections from the writings of Goldsmith," "Selections from English Literature" and "Poetical Selections."

We have already shown that Vidyasagar was a great appreciator of merits. His heart was always drawn to a spirited, amiable, kind, truthful and honest man, be he a Hindu, Brahma, Christian, or Mussulman—be he a native of his father-land or of a foreign country. Whatever might be his course, if Vidyasagar believed that he was working sincerely for the good of his country, he would clasp him in his fond embraces. Keshub Chunder Sen, the famous orator of Bengal, was a great favourite with him, although the opinions of the two widely diverged on many points, simply because Vidyasagar believed that the orator wished well of the country. Keshub Chunder also had a great fond regard for him. The two often met in Vidyasagar's house, and whenever they were together, they had no other talk than the device of means for the good of the country.

Raj Narayan Basu, though a Brahma, had, by his honesty and truthfulness, won over Vidyasagar's intimate friendship. The two reciprocated feelings of affectionate esteem for each other. Raj

Narayan believed that if Vidyasagar had turned a missionary and preacher, he could have done a great good to the people. He even went so far as to declare his idea to Vidyasagar. The latter gave a somewhat humorous reply. He said, — 'I don't want to be a preacher. If I have to suffer punishment for what I am and what I have been doing, I must take the consequences. Suppose, I turn a missionary and convert some people to my faith. If they should be asked who converted them, they must point to me, and supposing that they are punishable for their acts, it is I on whose back the punishment is sure to fall. I can suffer for my own sins ; but how can I receive stripes for others ?'

Raj Narayan consulted Vidyasagar on all important matters. He once asked for his friend's advice on the subject of his daughter's marriage. Vidyasagar conveyed his instructions by a long letter couched in respectful terms. The letter was written in Bengali ; we will give here its purport in English :—

'Accept my best compliments—

'It is some days that your letter reached me ; but I was very busy with different matters, and could not therefore reply to your letter in time. Please excuse me the delay.

'I have bestowed my best thoughts on the subject of your daughter's marriage, but have failed to decide upon the advice that I am to give you

To speak the truth, it is very difficult to advise on these matters. In the first place, you are a Brahma. As you are a strict follower of that faith, you should by all means pursue the course adopted by Babu Devendra Nath Tagore on the occasion of his daughter's marriage, if you think, that course was in consonance with the Brahma religion. In the second place, if you do not pursue the course adopted by Devendra Babu, and celebrate the marriage of your daughter in accordance with the old practice, there will arise a great obstacle to the propagation of Brahma marriage. In the third place, it is most doubtful whether the celebration of your daughter's marriage according to the Brahma practice should be considered valid on all points. For these reasons I am unable and unwilling to lend you any advice on this point. But this much I can say, that you should not jump at once into any side.

‘What I really mean to say on this subject is, that it is not proper to ask for other people's advice in these matters. In such cases one ought to ask one's own heart for instructions, and act up to its dictates. For whomever you will consult on this point, will deliver his counsels according to his own opinions and wishes ; he will never consult your good or duty.

‘In my opinion, you would do well to think over the matter seriously, and then determine for yourself which course to pursue.

‘I am somewhat better. Dated 3rd Asvin.

‘Yours

Sd. ‘Isva Chandra Sarma.’

The reader is, no doubt, familiar with the name of the saintly Ram Krishna Paramahansa, whose purity of manners, honesty of purpose, and pious conduct had drawn to him many disciples. He was fond of the company of pious and honest persons. One day he said to his disciples that he wanted to have an interview with the famous Vidyasagar. His disciples asked him why he so wished. He replied, because without God's love and divine grace, Vidyasagar could not have been so great. Accordingly he presented himself one evening before our hero. No sooner did he appear, than Vidyasagar rose from his seat and advanced to receive him ; but before he could approach the Paramahansa, the latter sat down before him upon the floor of the room, and said,—‘I have crossed drains and ditches, pools and tanks, and at last I am come to the *Sagar* (sea).’ Vidyasagar replied,—‘As you are already come, there is no help ; you may take out some salt water, if you like, or if you cast your net, you will fish only shells ; there is nothing in this sea but salt water and shells.’ The Paramahansa said,—‘ Why should I take out salt water ? There is not merely a sea of salt ; there are a sea of milk, a sea of curd, a sea of honey, and so forth. You are not a sea of ignorance ; you are one of knowledge. When I have come to you, I will fish out pearls ; you are full of pearls.’ After such humorous talks for some time, they fell to serious conversation on different topics,

and each was highly delighted at the other's conduct and manner of speech. In the meantime, arrived a quantity of the well-known delicious confectionary of Burdwan presented to Vidyasagar by one of his friends. He requested the Paramahansa to partake of the dainty sweets. The saintly visitor accepted the invitation and ate of the sweetmeats. Henceforth the two had a great fond regard and esteem for each other.

CHAPTER XXIX.

POLYGAMY.

On this subject, we have to fall back to a period some years prior to the time we have now arrived at. Contemporaneously with the widow marriage movement, Vidyasagar had set on foot an agitation on another subject of social reform, namely, the prevention of the practice of polygamy among the Hindus, particularly the Kulin Brahmans of Bengal. It is said, that his attention was first drawn to the subject by the pitiful cries of a female relative of his, who had been married to a Kulin Brahman that had taken to him many other wives besides her, and consequently never had the fortune to enjoy the happiness of her husband's company for any considerable time. She knew that Vidyasagar had originated the widow marriage movement with a view to ameliorate the miseries of widows, which led her to

believe that he would espouse the cause of the Kulin girls and would try his best to mitigate their sufferings. With this hope, she urgently requested him to see if he could do anything for them also. Vidyasagar promised to her that he would leave no stone unturned to uproot this evil practice from Hindu Society.

He applied himself heart and soul to the cause, and on the 27th December 1855, he submitted to Government a petition subscribed by 25,000 persons, among whom there were Maharaja Mahatap Chand Bahadur of Burdwan and a number of influential and leading personages, praying for a legislation for the prevention of the practice of polygamy among the Hindus. We have not space to quote at length the long petition. We will, therefore, content ourselves with giving space to only a small portion of it :—

* * * *

“The Coolins marry solely for money and with no intention to fulfil any of the duties which marriage involves. The women who are thus nominally married without the hope of ever enjoying the happiness which marriage is calculated to confer particularly on them, either pine away for want of objects on which to place the affections which spontaneously arise in the heart or are betrayed by the violence of their passions and their defective education into immorality.

* * * *

“That the remedy, though obvious and perfectly consistent with the Hindu Law, cannot, in the present disorganised state of Hindu Society, be applied by the force of public opinion, or any other power than that derived by Legislature.”

In the course of one year, a number of similar petitions were submitted to Government by Maharaja Satis Chandra Ray Bahadur of Nuddea, the Raja of Dinajpur, and some influential bodies of the several districts of Bengal proper. Among these, the one submitted on the 22nd July, 1856, by Babu Raj Mohan Ray, a Zemindar of Dacca, was subscribed by many Pandits and professors of Sanskrit, besides a great number of laymen. We cannot forbear quoting a small extract from this petition :—

* * * *

“The female children married under the circumstances commonly continue after the marriage to live with their parents, their nominal husbands generally taking no notice of them and having no communication with them ; but that, in the event of the death of their husbands, they are subject to all the disabilities which law and custom impose upon Hindu widows.”

But the attempts of the petitioners failed. The Government had already passed the Widow Marriage Act in spite of the opposition of the majority of the Hindus, and they thought inadvisable and unsafe to force upon the subjects

another such Law against their will. Moreover, the great Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, which shook the foundation of the British Empire in India, having broken out shortly after the legislation on widow marriage, the authorities were too deeply engrossed with the thoughts of suppressing the rebellion to attend to anything else of this nature.

But Vidyasagar was a man of great strength of mind, fixedness of purpose, and perseverance. He was not a man to lose heart and give up all attempts on one failure. After the lapse of nearly nine years, he again took up the subject, and requested his playmates to give one more lift to his kite. On the 1st February, 1866, he again submitted to Government a petition, for the prevention of polygamy, subscribed by nearly 21,000 persons, among whom there were such influential and leading members, such as Maharaja Satis Chandra Ray Bahadur of Nuddea, Raja Satya Saran Ghoshal of Bhukailas, Raja Pratap Chandra Sinha of Kandi, and others. The petition ran as follows :—

“PETITION AGAINST POLYGAMY.

“To the Honorable Sir Cecil Beadon,

“ Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.

“The humble petition of the undersigned Hindu inhabitants of the Province of Bengal.

“*Respectfully sheweth*—That about nine years ago no less than 32 petitions signed by nearly twenty-five thousand Hindus of Bengal, were pre-

sented to the late Legislative Council of India, ringing to the notice of the Council, the grievous and revolting abuses of the practice of polygamy in Bengal and praying for a legislative enactment for the prevention thereof.

"It is superfluous for your petitioners to dilate on the evils which result from the pernicious custom under notice, or to reiterate the reasons and considerations which require the interference of the Legislature in this vitally important subject. They have been described and stated at length in the petitions, referred to above, and your petitioners, many of whom had signed the said petitions, desire to mention that they fully subscribe to the allegations, suggestions, and prayers therein contained.

"Occupying the position which the British Government does in India, it is, your petitioners respectfully submit, its manifest duty to meet the wants and wishes of the people by such legislative and administrative measures as may be deemed necessary for the suppression of any social abuses, which are the remnants of customs neither founded on abstract reason nor on the national religions. And this obligation, it is needless to add, becomes the more imperative, when the people, as in the present instance, are themselves the most forward in seeking the aid of the Legislature.

"Your petitioners are not aware of the reasons which influenced the late Legislative Council in not responding to such a large, influential and ear-

nest appeal on an admittedly momentous question of social reformation ; but they believe that the disastrous events, which shook the foundation of the empire in 1857, over-shadowed, for the time being, all considerations of internal progress.

"The empire has, however, under the benign dispensation of Providence, entered upon a new era of peace, progress and prosperity, and your Honor's Administration has been distinguished by not a few measures connected with the material and social improvement of the people. It is the fervent hope and prayer of your petitioners that before your Honor laid down the responsibilities of your office, your Honor might signalize the close of your long and successful career by emancipating the females of Bengal from the pains, cruelties and attendant crimes of the debasing custom of Polygamy.

"And your petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

(Sd.) "Maharaja Satish Chandra Ray Bahadur
of Nadia,

"Pratap Chandra Sing of Kandi.

"Joykisssen Mukharji of Uttarpara.

"Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, &c. &c. &c.

"The 1st Feb. 1866."

On the 19th March, 1866, a deputation consisting of Raja Satya Saran Ghoshal of Bhukailas, Pandits Bharat Chandra Siromani and Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Babus Dwarka Nath Mitter,

Jagadananda Mukharji, Peary Churn Sircar, Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari, Kristo Das Pal, Durga Charan Laha, and fifteen other respectable personages waited upon Sir Cecil Beadon, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, as representatives of the petitioners. Raja Satya Saran Ghoshal, as foreman of the delegates, read out the petition, and presented it in the hands of the Lieutenant Governor, who said in reply :—

“Rajah,—I have great pleasure in receiving this numerously signed memorial, and in assuring you and the other highly respectable gentlemen who compose this deputation, that I shall gladly use my best endeavours to procure the enactment of a law to restrain the abuses attending the practice of Polygamy among Hindus, and to impose upon a custom, which I cannot but regard as altogether demoralizing, the utmost degree of restriction consistent with the reasonable opinions and wishes of the intelligent Hindu public.

“I have taken a deep interest in the question since it was first seriously agitated by our late lamented friend, Babu Rama Prosad Ray, in February, 1857, when a great number of petitions on the subject had been presented to the Legislative Council. Sir John Peter Grant promised very shortly to introduce a Bill for the abolition of Hindu Polygamy, and he would no doubt have fulfilled his promise but for the mutiny of the native army, which broke out soon afterwards.

Three years ago my honourable friend, Raja Deonarayan Sing of Benares, essayed to bring a Bill for this purpose into the Viceroy's Council, and was, I believe, prevented from doing so only by a suggestion from Lord Elgin, that some further expression of public opinion was desirable before having recourse to legislation. On both these occasions, I did all that I prudently could, to advance a measure of social reformation, of which the importance is, in my opinion, second only to the abolition of infant marriage.

"After this public expression of Hindu opinion, I feel myself at liberty to revive the subject. It is one which must, I think, be dealt with by the Imperial Legislature, and I may be permitted to say how glad I should have been to support the Maharaja of Burdwan if he had felt himself in a position to press it upon the attention of the Council. As it is, I shall lose no time in submitting your memorial to the Governor-General in Council, and I shall be prepared, with the permission of His Excellency, to introduce a Bill next session, which I trust may be accepted by the Council and prove satisfactory to the large bodies of Hindus, whose opinions are expressed in this memorial."

Maharaja Mahatap Chand Bahadur of Burdwan also presented another petition to the same effect as the former. But the movement was again destined to end in failure.

On this subject, the following appeared in the Hindoo Patriot of the 26th March, 1866 :—

***Koolin Polygamy.**—After the lapse of a decade a fresh agitation has been organised under the auspices of that ardent advocate of social reform, Pundit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, for the restriction of the abuses of the Koolin Polygamy. The appeal which he has initiated has been endorsed by all sections of Hindu community of Bengal, the wealthy, the learned, the orthodox, as well as the enlightened. The petition, which we publish in another column, it will be observed, bears the signatures of representatives of all classes of the community and all shades of opinions. We notice in it the names of the great Zemindars of Bengal, men who in the aggregate may be said to own half the country, of the most eminent Pundits of Nadia, Calcutta and other places, the expounders of the Sastras, and the custodians of our ancient learning, of the representatives of the strongholds of orthodoxy in town and in the Mufussil, of the acknowledged leaders of the educated class, and last, though not the least, of the head and other members of the reformed party of the Brahmie faith. The petition does not attempt to argue the question of the abuses of Polygamy in Bengal ; it avoids a discussion of the subject, simply because the thirty-two petitions, which have been presented in 1866, were replete with it. But a repetition of the arguments and considerations, which led to the movement ten years ago, would not have come amiss at the present time. There are now many able to

form an independent opinion, who were in schools ten years ago, while there might be others who might have forgotten what they had subscribed to in former petitions. Such being the case, we do not wonder that the brevity of the petition has been misunderstood in certain quarters, that it has been construed to be a prayer for the total abolition of Polygamy, while it only seeks to correct the abuses of that custom."

The Hon'ble C. E. Buckland, in his 'Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors', says :—

"In 1855, the Maharaja of Burdwan presented a petition to the Legislative Council setting forth the monstrous evils arising from the practice of unrestricted polygamy, and Sir J. P. Grant promised in 1857 to introduce a Bill on the subject : but the Mutiny stopped all further action. Several petitions having in 1863 been presented to Government by nearly 21,000 Hindus in Bengal for the enactment of a law to restrain the abuses attending the practice of polygamy among certain classes of Hindus, and it appearing from these and from the notices taken of them by the native Press that the greater proportion of the more advanced section of the native community were anxious to have some check placed on a social abuse which had become intolerable, an application was made to His Excellency the Governor-General, under section 43 of the Indian Councils Act, for permission to introduce into the Bengal Council a

Bill for the prevention of polygamy among the Hindus in Bengal, except under certain specified circumstances. The Government of India, however, doubted whether the popular feeling in Bengal was sufficiently prepared for legislation on this subject, and also remarked that the proposed measure, while it would restrain the excesses of polygamy, would have the effect of giving legal sanction to its adoption within the prescribed limits, an objection which, in the opinion of the Government of India, was entitled to greater weight than the Lieutenant-Governor appeared inclined to concede to it. On these considerations the Governor-General in Council desired that no Bill should be at once introduced, but that further inquiries should be prosecuted. Acting under these directions the Lieutenant-Governor appointed a Committee consisting of some of the leading members of the native community in Calcutta, associated with Messrs. C. Hobhouse and H. T. Prinsep, with instructions to mature a scheme which would put a stop to the evils complained of, without, on the one hand, affecting the general liberty possessed by all Hindus of taking more than one wife, or on the other giving express sanction to that liberty by a legislative enactment. The report of the Committee was submitted in February 1867. The Kulin Brahmins being the class to whom the excesses complained of were almost exclusively confined, (and chiefly to the Bhongo

Kulins), the Committee gave a sketch of the origin of this denomination of Brahmins and of the various classes of Kulins existing at the time. They also enumerated the customs prevalent, from which the alleged abuses (which they believed to be exaggerated and on the decline) took their rise. They further proved very clearly that these customs had for the most part no warrant among the approved authorities of Hindu Theology. Thus far, in the opinion of the Committee, the path for the legislation was smooth enough, as a declaratory Act might be passed setting forth the law on the subject of polygamy and making infraction of it penal. But the report further showed that although the chief abuses of polygamy would be condemned by a reference to the authorized Hindu law, this law at the same time warranted the suppression of one wife and the contraction of subsequent marriages on many grounds which in the eye of English law were frivolous or untenable. They therefore pointed out that, owing to the restriction imposed upon them that legal sanction to polygamy was not to be conveyed, they were unable to recommend even the passing of a declaratory Act of the kind stated above.

" One member of the Committee, the Pandit Ishwar Chandra Surma (Vidyasagar) maintained his opinion that the evils were not greatly exaggerated, and that the decrease of these evils was

not sufficient to do away with the necessity of legislation. His opinion also was that a Declaratory Law might be passed without interfering with that liberty which the Hindus possessed in the matter of marriage. Sir C. Beadon regarded the report of the Committee as showing the impossibility of legislating under the conditions imposed by the Government of India, while it gave a deplorable picture of the state of the Hindu marriage law, to which sooner or later a remedy must be applied. He did not share the sanguine anticipations entertained by the native members of the Committee that the Kulin Brahmins would settle into a monogamous habit only by the force of education and social opinion. He received with satisfaction their testimony that the opinion of Hindus had undergone a remarkable change within the last few years, and that the custom of taking a plurality of wives as a means of subsistence had come to be marked with strong disapprobation, and he hoped that, with the further progress of these enlightened ideas, the necessity for legislation as the effectual means of giving them full effect would at no distant time be realized.

"In the meantime a despatch was received from the Secretary of State in which he objected to any measure of a legislative character being adopted at present, as it did not appear that a large majority of people even in Bengal were

against the practice of polygamy, apart from the special abuses practised by the Kulin Brahmins."

We have already said, that Vidyasagar was not the man to be put back by one or two failures. When he saw that he had nothing to expect from Government in this matter, he fell to thinking of some other means to remedy the evil. He decided upon persuading his fellow-countrymen of the impropriety and unlawfulness of the practice, and thus leaving the matter in their own hands.

In July, 1871, he issued a paper on Polygamy, the subject of discussion being whether Polygamy was consonant to the Hindu Sastras. In the first portion of the pamphlet, Vidyasagar has admitted that in certain cases the taking of more wives than one is canonical. Maharaja Dasaratha, Rama's father, had many wives. Vidyasagar has said, that Dasaratha married so many wives for the procreation of a male issue, and that what he did was, therefore, not uncanonical. Vidyasagar's arguments were based mainly on the two following passages of Manu :—

(1) "মহাপাসাদুভাট প্রতিকূল চ বা ভবেৎ ।

ব্যাধিতা ব্যাধিবন্তেবা হিংসার্বাচীচ সৰ্ব্বদা ॥" *i. e.*

' If the wife is given to drinking, or is unfaithful, or if she always acts contrary to the wishes of the husband, or if she is ever-diseased, or is of the malicious turn of mind, or is given to dissipation of money, under any of these circumstances, the husband may take another wife.'

(2) “বক্ষ্যষ্টমেধিবৈদ্যাকে দশমে তু মৃতপ্রজা ।

একাদশে স্ত্রীজননী সত্যস্বপ্রিয়বাদিনী ॥” i. e.,

‘If the wife is sterile, then at the eighth year, if her male issue dies, then at the tenth year, if she gives birth only to female issues, then at the eleventh year, and if she is given to speaking unpleasant things, then without loss of time, the husband may marry another wife.’

Vidyasagar attempted to demonstrate that under any other circumstance, the taking of more wives than one was uncanonical according to the Hindu Sastras. The long and short of his arguments was that, when inter-marriage between couples of different classes had been interdicted in the Kali Yuga, the people were no more at liberty to contract marriages according to their arbitrary will. In the preface to this pamphlet, Vidyasagar has said ;—

‘The female sex being comparatively weaker, they are dependent on the male sex, the more so on account of the evil customs of Society. Owing to this weakness and dependence, they pass their days in a state of degradation and humiliation. The strong, authoritative male sex commit unlawful acts of violence on the other sex according to their sweet will. The females being quite helpless, put up with them patiently, and lead a miserable life. This is almost the case all over the world. But the sadly deplorable state, under which the females of this unfortunate land pine away on ac-

count of the excessive inhumanity, selfishness, and thoughtlessness of our males, is to be found nowhere else. The stronger sex of this country have been cruelly persecuting the weaker one under pretexts of some evil customs and practices, of which Polygamy is, at present, the most pernicious of all. This very vile, inhuman practice has caused incalculable sufferings to the woman-kind. The hardships and miseries that the females undergo under the prevalence of this custom are really heart-rending. In fact, the violence has run to such excess, that those who have the least conscience and sense of right and wrong, have one and all stood up against this cruel practice. They heartily wish that it should be abolished this very moment. Under the present state of the country, it is quite impossible to prevent this wide-spread custom without the aid of legislation. For this reason, many have come forward eagerly to petition the Government praying for the prevention of the incalculably injurious practice of Polygamy. Protests have also been issued from some quarters. I will now try my best to refute these protests, one by one.'

In fact, after Vidyasagar's first paper on Polygamy had been out, protests were issued by Tara Nath Tarkavachaspati, Dvaraka Nath Vidyabhushan, Kshetranath Smritiratna, Gangadhar Kaviratna, the renowned native physician of Murshidabad, and some others. The whole of Bengal was in a

perturbed state at the time. Tarkavachaspati's paper was composed in Sanskrit, and the rest were all in Bengali. To refute the objections of these opponents, Vidyasagar issued his second paper against Polygamy in March, 1872.

During the controversy on Polygamy, again appeared the "Competent Bhaipo" (nephew), mentioned of before, with a paper in support of Vidyasagar, which he named "Ati Alpai Haila" (only a very little is given). It was an attack on Taranath Tarkavachaspati. Its language is lowly satirical, and is not consonant to good taste. The paper begins with a most scurrile piece of poesy, very like those given utterance to by the fish-wives of Calcutta. Some attribute its authorship to Vidyasagar. But it is improbable that he should indulge in such foul language. Taranath Tarkavachaspati again issued a pamphlet of 20 pages in reply to the paper of the "Bhaipo"; but it is not so piercingly satirical. Shortly afterwards, appeared another anonymous paper of 25 pages, titled "Prerita Tentul" (Tamarind forwarded), attacking Vidyasagar most virulently. Besides these, many odes, songs, and short lays were also issued. In the correspondence columns of the Education Gazette, appeared a short poem, with the heading, "Kulin Kaminir Ukti" (the sayings of a Kulin woman).

The attacks of Tarkavachaspati and Vidyasagar against each other were quite unworthy of wise

men of their standard, and were the generating cause of a great disagreement between the two, which ended only with their life. No doubt, Vidyasagar displayed his able powers of investigation, a great tact and ingenuity in arrangement of arguments and drawing up of conclusions, and his command of language in his papers, but in trying to attack Tarkavachaspati, he failed to keep his temper. It must be admitted, to the great credit of Vidyasagar, that the system of logical arguments and reasonings adopted by him was quite unprecedented in the annals of Bengal. Some vain and defiant writers of Bengali insinuate that Vidyasagar was devoid of originality, and sometimes ridicule his translated works. We have nothing to say against these meanly malicious self-arrogant people; they are mere objects of pity. Vidyasagar's papers on Polygamy are master-pieces of original composition.

Vidyasagar also wrote an English version of his papers on Polygamy, and commenced its publication. A portion of it was only printed, but he could not finish the printing.

CHAPTER XXX.

DISASTERS AGAIN.

In June, 1872, Vidyasagar's second daughter, Kumudini Devi, was married to Aghor Nath Chattopadhyay of Rudrapur in the district of 24

Pergunnas. He was Sub-Registrar of Purulia in Manbhum.

About this time, arose some incidents, which led Vidyasagar to be highly offended with his only son, Narayan Chandra. By degrees, the displeasure grew to such a fearful height, that he was constrained to estrange him. There was thus a wide gulf between the two. God alone knew what his heart suffered at the unnatural separation, but to all external appearance he had perfect composure, which showed that he was not dissatisfied with the step he had taken. Narayan Chandra's mother was, of course, most sincerely grieved at the estrangement of her only, dear son. She never afterwards felt ease or comfort. She often remonstrated with her husband on his uncompromising conduct towards the son, but Vidyasagar was as firm as a rock. Narayan Chandra's enemies found an opportunity to be revenged upon ; they brought on serious complaints against him. They added fuel to the fire, and kept Vidyasagar's feelings of displeasure against him always wide awake, thereby preventing the reconciliation so heartily desired by the mother.

Narayan Chandra, by his own efforts, became a Sub-Registrar of Assurances. He was, at that time, as spirited and self-reliant as his father. He visited his father's house now and then, but no talk passed between the two.

Instances of a father's estrangement of his child

for the latter's falling in duty or improper conduct are very rare in this world. Although Vidyasagar had been constrained to be separated from his son to all outward appearance, he could not wholly efface his love for him. The ties of natural affection are too strong to be easily cut asunder. It is said, that on one occasion, a look at the son's photograph moved him to a flood of tears. Narayan Chandra's wife and children were very dear to his heart. He kept up epistolary communication with them, and aided them by remittances of money.

On the 15th June, 1872, the "Hindu Family Annuity Fund" was established. It was started with very laudable objects. The natives of Bengal, with a limited income, can leave no provision for the maintenance of their parents, wives, children, or other relations. The Fund was created with a view to provide for such means. If one wished that one's wife or any other relative should have a monthly allowance of 5 rupees, after one's death, one had to deposit two rupees and a quarter every month till the last day of his life. If one wished for a monthly provision of 10 rupees, one had to deposit a proportionate amount. In this way one might make provisions for a monthly allowance up to the limit of 30 rupees.

The necessity for the establishment of such a Fund was first determined at a meeting of some respectable and influential native gentlemen held on the 23rd February, 1872, in the premises of the

Metropolitan Institution. The Fund was first opened at No. 32, College Street, with 10 subscribers. Besides, a few benevolent, wealthy persons paid considerable amounts as donations to begin with. The Paikpara Raj family contributed 2,500 rupees. For the first and second years, Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar and the Hon'ble Dwarka Nath Mitter were Trustees of the Fund. On Dwarka Nath Mitter's death, Maharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore, the Hon'ble Rames Chandra Mitra, and Vidyasagar were Trustees for the third year. At the outset, the following gentlemen were office-bearers of the Fund. Chairman—Syama Charan De. Deputy-Chairman—Muralidhar Sen. Directors—Ray Dina Bandhu Mitra Bahadur, Rajendra Nath Mitra, Govinda Chandra Dhar, Nabin Chandra Sen, Isan Chandra Mukhopadhyay, Prasanna Kumar Sarvvadhikari, Nanda Lal Mitra, Rajendra Nath Bandyopadhyay, Narendra Nath Sen, and Panchanan Chaudhuri. Medical Officer and Health Examiner of the Subscribers—Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar.

Some time after the foundation of the Hindu Family Annuity Fund, the "Albert Life Assurance Company" was started with the same object ; but the latter business failed, to the great loss of many poor persons.

Vidyasagar was connected with the Annuity Fund till the end of 1875. In his opinion, the Fund worked well in an organised way for three

years since its establishment. On the 27th December, 1875, he addressed a letter to the Directors intimating his design to sever his connection with the Fund. On the 2nd January, 1876, the Directors held a special meeting and called on Vidyasagar to give his reasons for his intended separation. He communicated his reasons in a very long letter, dated 21st February, 1876. The letter was subsequently printed, covering over 20 pages Foolscap. The language of the letter is vigorous, and may be given a high place as a very good piece of literary composition in Bengali. The reasons set forth therein were not groundless. The gist of what he said was, that the Secretary and most of the Directors had combined themselves into a party and had mustered strong to thwart Vidyasagar's measures and to humiliate him, and that they had brought about much irregularity in the management of the Fund. He, therefore, thought it advisable to withdraw himself from its connection.

He charged the Directors with disregard of the rules and neglect of the true interests of the Fund, and the Subscribers with indifference to its affairs. His idea was, that the natives of Bengal had not yet learned to work in conjunction and co-operation. He stated it distinctly in his letter, when referring to the ill-management of the Fund. It was this conviction of his that had led him to decline to join the Fund at the outset. Great

persuasions had afterwards induced him to join it.

That the Secretary and the Directors of his party had mustered strong and brought about great irregularities in the management of the Fund, Vidyasagar demonstrated very clearly. The main charges brought against them were, that the accounts had not been properly kept, that the rules had not been altered when necessary, that the name of the Chairman had been put down in the Annual Report of the Fund without his cognisance when the latter had declined to sign it for irregular proceedings, that unnecessary withdrawals of money had been made from the Fund's Bank, and so forth. He brought another very serious charge. A clerk being required for the office of the Fund, Vidyasagar had been urgently requested by the Directors to find a competent man for the post. He had at first declined to take the responsibility, but at the pressing solicitations of the Directors, he gave a fully qualified man. This man had already been holding an office in the East Indian Railway Company's service, and Vidyasagar made him resign that place, and appointed him as clerk to the Fund. But shortly afterwards, the Secretary dismissed the man, without even consulting the Directors, and thus placed Vidyasagar in a false position. The reasons set forth by Vidyasagar were most distressingly painful. He stated in clear and

plain but pitiful words how sincerely he was pained at the severance of his connection with the Fund. The purport of what he said in the concluding portion of his letter was :—

‘I lent my utmost exertions and attention to the foundation and improvement of this Fund. You have expectations of the enjoyment of the fruits of this tree, but I do not entertain such hopes. My idea is, that every one should try his best to do good to his native country. It was with this conviction, that I bestowed my best thoughts and endeavours on this subject. I had no other motive of furthering my self-interest. I do not know whether you will believe me when I say, but still I must say, that I have a greater affection for the Fund than any of you. My inmost heart alone knows what pangs it suffers to forget that affection wholly. Those whom you have intrusted with the charge of management, do not walk in a straight path. These circumstances have led me to be afraid that my further continuance in the business of the Fund will in future bring a great censure on my head, and I shall be made answerable before God. It is this fear only that makes me cut off my connection with the Fund, though most reluctantly and painfully.

‘At your special meeting of the 2nd January, you have expressed a wish and request that I should retain my connection with the Fund ; but it has become very difficult for me to comply

with your request. Numbers of people come to consult me whether they should subscribe to the Fund. I am then put to a great dilemma. Under the present state of the Fund, I think, it would be wrong to advise any one to subscribe to it ; while it would be equally wrong to deter any body from subscribing to it. The reason is, that it would be deceiving a man to induce him to subscribe to it, when a conviction has grown upon me, that in future the Fund might be in a state of disorder ; while to deter him would be acting in opposition to the Fund. To deceive a man wilfully, and to act in opposition to it while continuing in its connection, both are equally very wrong. If I keep any further connection with the Fund, I must commit either of the wrongs. It is this dilemma that disables me to comply with your request, for which I crave your indulgence.

‘ In fact, I am an unimportant person ; yet you relied on me and charged me with such an important trust ; I therefore pour forth my heartfelt gratitude to you. In the course of the period I held the important trust, I must have committed some errors ; you will, please, be good enough to excuse me for them. So long that I was one of your trustees, I tried my best to do good to the Fund. I never cognisantly or wilfully showed the slightest disregard, indifference or inattention to it. I hope, you would be graciously pleased to give me leave to retire.’

From this time forward he had no connection with the Annuity Fund. Some time afterwards, Maharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore and the Hon'ble Rames Chandra Mitra also withdrew their names from the Fund. Consequently, the Directors had to seek the help of the Government in the affair.

Vidyasagar had put forth all his energies—had devoted himself, heart and soul, to the establishment of the Hindu Family Annuity Fund. As he was the principal starter, he was nominated one of the trustees. For one year he worked with full vigour. At the end of the first year, the enthusiasm diminished a little ; in the second year, it slackened still more ; and, in the third year, his independent spirit revolted at the idea of acting in subordination to others, who had in consequence of mustering strong, had the upper hand in everything. After all, Vidyasagar was a native of unfortunate Bengal, particularly of this degenerated age. The Bengalees of the present age have no unity among themselves ; they cannot act in union and conjunction. Every one is independent ; every one is arbitrary ; every body follows his own opinions. It was with a view to remove this slur of his countrymen that Vidyasagar attempted to exhibit a different scenery on the stage of the Annuity Fund. But he had to yield to the overpowering influence of the opponents. In the short space of three years he was obliged to quit his post. In giving up the helm of the Fund, he

charged others with want of unity and with incapacity to work in conjunction ; but others laid the blame on his shoulders. They said that in many cases Vidyasagar had proved his own incapacity to work in conjunction with other people. No doubt, he joined them, at the outset, with great enthusiasm, but he could never keep to the end. This was Vidyasagar's peculiarity. Such peculiarity is undoubtedly an indication of spiritedness ; but does it not sometimes lead to arbitrariness ?

The letter, referred to above, clearly showed that Vidyasagar was not a double-dealer ; he was never afraid to open his mind for fear of incurring one's displeasure, or to suppress his feelings for the satisfaction of another. He firmly believed that it was wrong not to declare frankly one's own mind or opinions. As he never shrank from giving out freely his own convictions, so he was highly pleased, when he found others doing the same. We will illustrate this by an incident of his previous life.

On one occasion, Mahamahopadhyay Rakhal Das Nyayratna, Pandit Sibchandra Sarvvabhauma, Madhu Sudan Smritiratna, and Panchanan Tarkaratna called upon him. The last-named visitor was, at that time, still a pupil but had nearly finished his course of instruction. In course of conversation, they fell to discussing religious topics. Vidyasagar said that religion was nothing but formation of parties. ' Take for instance the following *Sloka* of Manu :—

“বেনাম্য পিতরো জাতা বেন জাতাঃ পিতামহাঃ ।

তেন যাতাং সতাং মার্গং তেন গচ্ছন্ দৃষাতি ।” *i.e.*

‘You should take an honest course, and follow the track of your fathers and grandfathers ; it would not be wrong to pursue that track.’ Vidya-sagar continued,—‘Now, what is the meaning of this ? If you would take an honest course, why then should you go to follow the track of your forefathers ? The simple meaning is, that unless the two ways are indicated at the same time, the screw of your party becomes slack. Manu was afraid that if he indicated only the honest course and let it alone, the members of his party might quit his side, and pursue the honest course of other nations. It was this fear, that led him to bestow his best thoughts on the subject and indicate two ways at the same time.’

Panchanan Tarkaratna very humbly and politely suggested,—‘My interpretation is quite different. But, under the circumstances, it is not a very difficult thing to give such a signification of the Manu’s passage as may be somewhat gratifying to you.’

Vidyasagar.—‘How can you give that signification to it ?

Tarkaratna.—In the expression সতাং মার্গং there might be a clerical error ; it might very conveniently be read সতামার্গং ; and then, the meaning would be,—‘To follow the track of forefathers is the true course for virtuous people.’

Vidyasagar.—‘Nyayratna, this youth is very sharp, indeed !’

Rakhal Das Nyayratna and the other visitors unanimously complimented the young Tarkaratna in eloquent terms. At last, Vidyasagar said,— ‘What is the end of all this praise ? Nothing, but beggary. At this young age, he has finished the *Nyaya* and other philosophies ; it is a high compliment, no doubt. But what will he do ? Let him go home and starve.’

In the beginning of 1873, Vidyasagar had to face a most dire calamity. On the 4th February of that year, his eldest son-in-law, Gopal Chandra Samajpati, died of cholera at Benares, where he had gone in company with Vidyasagar’s nephew, (sister’s son), Beni Madhav Mukhopadhyay, for a change, as his health had already been much impaired. The news came upon our hero like a thunderbolt. He loved the son-in-law most dearly. Gopal Chandra was a young man of handsome and lovely appearance. He had a profound scholastic education and a poetic genius. His manners were most affable and courteous. Vidyasagar was most grievously afflicted at the loss of such a beloved relation. But to console his dear, widowed daughter, he had to assume the appearance of external composure, which served to rend his tender heart the more. He sympathised with his daughter most sincerely. She led a rigidly austere life ; Vidyasagar also did the same. She had to give

up fish and flesh and to eat only one meal a day ; Vidyasagar did the same. She fasted on the *Ekadasi* day ; her father also observed fasting on that day. This state of things continued for a considerable period. At last, at the urgent solicitations of the daughter, he had to give up the austerities.

He made Hemlata (which was the name of the eldest widowed daughter) the sole mistress of his house-hold. She also did her best to improve the affairs of her father. Her house-wifery and affectionate treatment pleased everybody. The busy, active life that she led to feed and tend her father and generally to bring ease and comfort to all the inmates of the house left her no leisure to openly shed tears for her dear husband. In fact, she was the goddess of the house-hold. Would the advocates of widow marriage open their eyes and see how a true Hindu widow can pass her days virtuously without pining away at the loss of one husband and eagerly looking out for another ? Hemlata had two little boys, whose sole charge fell on the shoulders of her father. Vidyasagar brought them up with the tenderest care. He made the best provisions possible for their education. The two boys, Sures Chandra Samajpati and Jatis Chandra Samajpati, read English and Sanskrit at home. Vidyasagar did not think fit to send his grandsons to school. He himself taught them Sanskrit, and engaged competent teachers to ins-

truct them in English. There was nothing in the world that he would not give them or do for them. If he ever heard them lament the loss of their father, it would pierce his heart like a poisoned dagger. The elder grand-son once expressed a desire to go to England, but his grand-father and mother, both prevented him. One day, when sitting to dinner, Sures Chandra said to his mother ;—‘Had *my* father been living now, I would never have gone to ask *your* father.’ Vidyasagar overheard this, and was moved to a flood of tears. If he saw them undertake or carry out a noble and benevolent deed, his delight knew no bounds. On one occasion, the younger boy, Jatis Chandra, found a poor man suffering from Dysentery, lying on the road. He brought home the helpless sufferer. Vidyasagar was highly pleased at his young grandchild’s humanity. He provided for the patient’s treatment and nursing, and took great care of him. But, unfortunately, the poor man’s days were numbered ; nothing could save him from the hands of death. Sures Chandra’s abilities for good composition were a source of great delight to the grand-father. The two boys were dearer to him than his own begotten children. Sures Chandra is, at present, the editor of the *Sahitya*, a well conducted monthly. Vidyasagar took charge not only of his own grandsons, but also of the mother, brothers, and sisters of the deceased son-in-law. He housed them in a separate

rented house, and provided for their comfortable living.

In spite of these dire catastrophes, the thoughts of his educational institutions were always vivid in his mind. He never for a moment lost sight of them. The anxieties for their welfare and success made him sometimes forget his afflictions. Even under such distressing circumstances, he opened, in 1874, a Branch Metropolitan School at Syampukur. Like them other institution, it soon rose to high eminence and success.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SHOE QUESTION.

On the 28th January, 1874, Vidyasagar, having an occasion to visit the Library of the Asiatic Society, proceeded to the place, accompanied by Haris Chandra, the celebrated Hindi poet of Benares (since deceased), and Surendra Nath Banarji, a son of Raj Krishna Banarji, who wanted to see the Indian Museum. It is needless to say that, at that time, the two institutions were located in one and the same building in Park Street. Vidyasagar was clothed, as usual with him, in a plain *Dhuti* and *Chadar* with a pair of native slippers covering his feet. Haris Chandra was dressed in accordance with the modern style of civilization, clothing his legs with trousers, his body with *Choga* and *Chapkan*, his head with a *Pagri*, and covering

his feet with a pair of English-made shoes. Surendra Nath was also very fashionably clothed. When they arrived at the gates of the building, Vidyasagar was prevented by the porter to enter into the rooms ; he was told to leave his shoes behind, as an Uriya like him could not be permitted to go in with his native slippers on. His two companions were allowed to go in without objection. Vidyasagar felt himself quite affronted, but thought fit not to utter a word of remonstrance. He at once left the place and stepped into his carriage, that was waiting outside the gates. No sooner did the news of the incident reach the ears of Babu Pratap Chandra Ghosh, the Assistant Secretary to the Asiatic Society, than he ran with all haste to Vidyasagar, and urgently requested him to come in, but our hero was a man of strong mind, and refused to re-enter the building, until he received a satisfactory reply to his letter, which, he said, he would soon write to the authorities. He then returned home, followed by his two companions.

On the 5th February, he addressed to the Secretary to the Trustees to the Indian Museum a long letter, some portions of which are quoted below :—

“ To

“ H. F. Blanford Esqr.

“ Honorary Secretary to the Trustees,
“ Indian Museum.”

“ Sir,

“ Having had occasion to visit the library of

the Asiatic Society of Bengal, I called on the 28th January last, and as I wore native shoes, I was not admitted, unless I would leave my shoes behind. I felt so much affronted that I came back without an expostulation.

"Whilst I was in the compound, I saw that native visitors, wearing native shoes, were made not only to uncover their feet, but also to carry their shoes with their own hands, though there were some upcountry people moving about in the museum-rooms with their shoes on."

* * * *

"Besides, if persons so wearing shoes of the English pattern, though coming on foot, could be admitted with shoes on, I could not make out why persons of the same status in life and under similar circumstances should not be admitted, simply because they happened to wear native shoes."

* * * *

"I have &c.,

(Sd). "Isvar Chandra Sarma,

5-2-74."

The Secretary to the Trustees to the Museum forwarded Vidyasagar's letter to the Honorary Secretary to the Asiatic Society on the 26th March, and on the same day informed Vidyasagar of his having done so. In fact, there was much red tape spent on the subject, but the authorities found no cause of complaint in the treatment accorded to Vidyasagar, and they dismissed the sub-

ject. This was what the Hindoo Patriot of the 26th July, 1874, said on the subject :—

“The great shoe question has turned up in quite an unexpected quarter—we mean in the rooms of the Asiatic Society. We have much pleasure in transcribing the following from the Englishman on the subject :—

‘We understand that the great shoe question has again come to the front and is occupying the attention of no less distinguished a body than the Council of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Pundit Ishwur Chunder Vidyasagar, a native gentleman of learning, modesty and merits, who has rendered inestimable services to his fellow countrymen and whose reputation extends far beyond the bounds of Asia, complains that he is not allowed to enter the rooms of the Asiatic Society with his shoes—native shoes—on, and the Council does not know precisely how to act in the matter. We can see but one course sufficiently dignified for the successors of Jones and Colebrooke—*viz.* to abstain from laying down, or in the remotest degree countenancing, a petty regulation which will fetter the usefulness of the Society, discourage the resort to it of eminent persons of the Pundit’s stamp, render it the laughing stock of Europe. A learned Society is the last body in the world that should revive obsolete caste distinctions and if, as in duty bound, it seeks to counterbalance an oppressive rule on one side by making an oppressive rule on the

other. We shall see many an unseemly fracas between the servants of the Society and scientific gentlemen who insist on the right of entering the rooms with their hats on,—a practice which is more unseemly because more conspicuous than the practice of wearing shoes.'

"The facts of the case, we believe, are these :— About three or four months ago, one day Pundit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, accompanied by a native friend from the North-west, went to the Indian Museum located in the Asiatic Society's building and was asked by the porters to leave his shoes at the portico, or rather to take off his shoes and keep them in his own hand if he wanted to go in. To this he did not of course consent, returned home, wrote a letter to the trustees of the museum enquiring as to whether they have passed any rule of the kind and observing if such a rule has been passed it would deter respectable native gentlemen, who wore shoes of the native pattern, from visiting the institution. He also wrote to the Council of the Asiatic Society that if the museum authorities enforced such a rule it would discourage respectable Pundits who like him wore native shoes from visiting Society's library—in as much as both the institutions were located in the same building. The museum authorities replied that they had not passed any such rule on the subject, but did not say whether they would pass any order for the discontinuance of the practice.

They also seemed to doubt whether the complaint applied to their servants. The Council of the Asiatic Society went farther and wrote to the Pundit in reply that native gentlemen ought to know the Indian etiquette in the matter. The Pundit, we learn, has sent rejoinders to the both. To the trustees of the museum he has written to say—‘It was the servants of the museum, as he had distinctly stated in his first letter, who had required him to take off his shoes.’ To the Council of the Society he has explained that the Indian custom is not to take off the shoes as a mark of respect, that the Indians do not leave their shoes behind in visiting each other if they are seated in rooms furnished with chairs, but that they do so when they sit on the *Farash* or carpet for their own comfort and convenience. The question is accordingly pending before the trustees of the Museum and the Council of the Asiatic Society. We are really surprised that the above question should be raised in institutions where above all others no invidious race distinctions should be made. The Museum is a place of public resort like a park or a public garden, and would a European gentleman think of taking off his hat at such a place, and if not why should a native be required to put off his shoes there. As for the Asiatic Society, it is the last place where the badge of racial degradation should be insisted upon. There men of all classes resort to cultivate

science, that is not a place for raising social questions on which it is notorious the natives are keenly and justly sensitive. The shoe question had one time assumed by no means a pleasant political character, and the highest authority in the land wisely decided that it should not be allowed to interfere with the social relations of the people with their rulers. It is said that Government order does not apply to native shoes. We do not understand what occult meaning is there in this distinction. If the leaving the shoes behind is a mark of respect, it matters little whether the shoes are of the European or the native pattern. But if there is a mark of respect attached to the leather, it is immaterial as to what form the leather may take. We hope the Council of the Asiatic Society and the trustees of the Museum will have the good sense not to make native gentlemen feel that to enter their rooms is to court insult."

CHAPTER XXXII.

LOSS OF FATHER.

About this time, he had some difference with Sir George Campbell, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, with respect to the *Smṛiti* branch of the Sanskrit College. Campbell was a man of highly enthusiastic and revolutionary spirit and rather chary of expenditure on high education. He revolutionised almost every department of the government under him.

The Hon'ble C. E. Buckland in his 'Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors,' says,—“Reform was the principal feature of Sir G. Campbell's Government. The experiment of appointing a Lieutenant-Governor who had not graduated in Lower Bengal certainly led to great changes, and it seemed as if every department and institution had to justify its method of working. It would have been impossible for any one, in such a position and bent on such a mission as Sir G. Campbell, to avoid running counter to many cherished ideas in conservative Bengal: and it was no wonder that the pressure he applied on all officers and classes tended to render him unpopular.”

A contemporary writer thus described Sir George Campbell :—“That he was more than a mere executive officer every one knows who knows India. His Governorship represented a virtual revolution, succeeding that of Sir William Grey. It was a change from desk management to root-and-branch administration, resting on fixed and matured views as to political principles underlying action. As a statesman, Sir G. Campbell stands foremost among the Lieutenant-Governors, and it is unpleasant to add that he was the least popular.”

He was a great enemy of the high education of the natives of the soil ; he lowered the status of the Berhampur, the Krishnagar, and the Sanskrit Colleges from the first to the second grade.

The Hon'ble C. E. Buckland, in his 'Bengal

under the Lieutenant-Governors,' says ;—"Reductions were carried out in the Berhampore, Krishnagar and Sanskrit Colleges, which provoked some expression of dissatisfaction among the upper and literate classes of Bengal. Sir G. Campbell's policy was to reduce the number of Colleges educating up to the highest point, concentrating in the remainder improved means of the highest education. The reduced Colleges were not abolished, but were still efficiently maintained to teach to the point to which experience proved that the greatest demand existed *i. e.* up to the First Arts standard."

It was this too excessive economical policy of his government that led him to resolve upon making a monthly saving of 650 rupees from the establishment charges of the Sanskrit College by the abolition of the posts of the Professors of *Smṛiti* and two professors of English. This resolution threw the whole country in a state of great agitation. Protests and oppositions were raised from every quarter, but without the desired success. It was, however, finally settled that the *Smṛiti* department should be placed under the tuition of the Professor of Rhetoric. The Bengal Government had previously asked Vidyasagar for his opinion on the point, and he had opposed the retrenching policy. But still, it was stated in Government resolution published in the Calcutta Gazette, that in this matter Vidyasagar's opinion had been taken. The people of the country very naturally.

suspected that Vidyasagar must have supported the policy of Government. He was, therefore, obliged to address a letter to Luttman Johnson, Private Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor, contradicting the statement of Government. The letter ran as follows :—

“ Calcutta, 23rd May 1872

“To

“ H. Luttman Johnson Esq.

“ Private Secretary to His Honor, the

“Lieutenant Governor of Bengal.

“ My Dear Sir,

“ Adverting to the Government order on the reorganisation of the Sanskrit College, published in the last Calcutta Gazette, I find that reference has been made to me and the Principal of the Sanskrit College as the persons among others with whom His Honor the Lieutenant Governor was pleased to discuss the subject, and His Honor considers their suggestions ‘to be so moderate and reasonable that he has much pleasure in being able substantially to comply with their wishes pending further trial of the arrangements now to be made.’ These arrangements are that the first Arts classes should be revived and that the Professorship of Hindu Law should be merged in that of Rhetoric and Philosophy by giving an increment of Rs 50 to the present incumbent for this additional duty.

“ As I was asked by you under instructions of His Honor to consult the leading members of

the Hindu community, who take interest in Sanskrit studies before meeting His Honor, and as it might lead to an impression that the above suggestions emanated from me, I think it my duty to remind His Honor that so far as the proposed arrangement for instruction in Hindu Law is concerned, it did not come from me. Indeed I told His Honor distinctly that the importance of the subject demanded a separate chair, and I still entertain the same opinion. Hindu Law, as His Honor is aware, is a vast subject—it forms the life-study of a man. It is true that there may be versatile persons, who may combine a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit literature with a profound acquaintance with Hindu Law, but such versatility is rare. To merge the chair of Hindu Law with other chairs is to give it a secondary rank and to reduce its practical usefulness, for a professor who will teach it at his leisure moments as it were cannot be expected to devote that attention to it, which the vastness of the subject demands. I find it stated in the Government letter that according to the Principal of the College "Smriti or Hindu Law is now taught in a most satisfactory manner by the professor in addition to some other duties." From my experience of the working of the college as ex-principal I cannot however persuade myself to subscribe to this opinion. Perhaps His Honor would form a clear idea of the anomaly of the proposed arrangement if he would consider the

effect of calling upon a Professor of Literature, Philosophy or Mathematics in the Presidency College, who may have attended Law lectures but who has not made law his special study, to fill the chair of Law in addition to other duties. I have no doubt that the legal profession would scout such an idea, and yet this is exactly the arrangement proposed for giving instruction in Hindu Law in the Sanskrit College. I have high respect for the attainments and scholarship of Pundit Mahesh Chandra, but I fear that the union of so many duties in his hands will not only result in a falling off in the study of Law but also of those branches, which he is prominently qualified to teach. His Honor observes, 'it was and is intended that the teaching of Hindu Law shall be fully maintained', but as I have endeavoured to show above His Honor's intention will be but ill-fulfilled by the arrangement proposed. I would therefore earnestly and respectfully solicit His Honor to consider this part of his recent orders. The saving which the absorption of the chair effects is so small, *viz.* Rs. 100 a month, that I earnestly trust that His Honor will see the propriety of making this concession to the Hindu community, particularly as His Honor has shown a commendable spirit of moderation and conciliation in these orders.

"As it might be inferred from the tenour of the Government letter referred to that I have advised

His Honor the proposed arrangement for filling the chair on Hindu Law, and as I am consequently liable to be misunderstood by the Hindu community, whose feeling is very strong on the subject of the chair of the Hindu Law, I would respectfully request that in justice to me His Honor may think fit to remove the erroneous impression which his too general allusion to my suggestions regarding the reorganisation of the Sanskrit College is calculated to produce on the public mind.

"I remain &c.

(Sd.) "Isvar Chandra Sarma."

To this letter Luttmann Johnson the Private Secretary replied, as follows :—

" Belvedere Alipore.

" The 25th May 1872

"My dear Pundit,

"I have laid your letter of the 23rd current about the recent orders for reorganisation of the Sanskrit College before His Honor the Lieutenant Governor. His Honor has no doubt that you are correct in saying that you did not individually recommend the absorption of the Professorship of Hindoo Law. His Honor desires me to assure you that he proposes to make the Hindoo Law the primary and not a mere secondary object of one of the chairs. He has every reason for believing that Pundit Mahesh Chandra is at least as qualified for the duty of teaching Hindoo Law as any other gentleman whom he could have selected

to succeed the late Professor, and he has the distinct assurance of the Principal that the Pundit is teaching the subject in the most satisfactory manner. Upon the whole, therefore, His Honour thinks that he has been well advised in the orders which he has passed. He must in the present experiment sufficiently before he can consent to make another change.

"I remain,

"Dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully

Sd. "H. Luttman Johnson

"Private Secretary."

With a view to remove the erroneous impression from the minds of the public, Vidyasagar afterwards addressed a letter to the Hindoo Patriot, which was published in its issue of the 10th June, 1872. The letter is quoted below :—

"To

The Editor of the Hindu Patriot.

"Dear Sir,

"As considerable misapprehension prevails among my countrymen as to the opinion I expressed to His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, when he did me the honour of consulting me regarding the Sanskrit College, particularly in reference to the constitution of the Chair of Hindu Law, I deem it due to lay before the public through the medium of your paper the accompanying correspondence which I hope will remove the

erroneous impression entertained on the subject. I am always reluctant to rush into print, but when I find myself actually abused and looked upon as the individual, who has advised the Lieutenant-Governor the arrangement about the Chair of Hindu Law, which is unhappily regarded as a piece of downright jobbery, I cannot in justice to myself refrain from letting the public know the part I have taken in this business. I need hardly add that I am compelled to resort to this step by the equivocal terms used in the letter of Mr. Bernard, Secretary to the Director of Public Instruction, on the subject. I however feel much indebted to His Honor for completely exonerating me in the last letter of his Private Secretary to my address.

"Yours faithfully

"The 8th June 1872. Sd. "Isvar Chandra Sarma."

His relations with Sir George Campbell being thus much strained some of his publications were excluded by Government from the list of text-books prescribed for schools in Bengal. As a matter of consequence, his income from books, which formed the main portion of his means, was considerably diminished. He was therefore obliged, though most painfully, to curtail some of the stipends which he had kindly settled on poor families. But as soon as he again found sufficient means for it, he raised the allowances to their former rate, which he had been constrained to retrench.

In this connection, we will notice here, in passing, the appointment of Pandit Mahes Chandra Nyayratna as a Professor of the Sanskrit College. On the retirement of the old professor, Pandit Premchand Tarkavagis, his place in the College fell vacant. There were two candidates for the post—Rammay Bhattacharyya, a brother of the retired professor, and Mahes Chandra Nyayratna. Both were qualified men ; the people naturally expected that the first-named Pandit would get the appointment. Although the second candidate was not a student of the Sanskrit College, yet he was highly proficient in Belles-lettres and Rhetoric, and had acquired a great reputation as the most learned man in the six *Darsans* (Philosophy). Mr. Cowell, the Principal of the college, found a difficulty in making the choice. At last, he asked for Vidyasagar's opinion in the matter. Vidyasagar said,—‘To teach the Kavya-prakas to the students of the Rhetoric class, the professor should have a sound knowledge of the *Nyaya* philosophy. Pandit Mahes Chandra Nyayratna has mastered the whole *Nyaya* Sastra ; I therefore think him to be duly qualified for the post.’ Nyayratna was accordingly appointed to the vacant place.

The continued physical and mental sufferings combined with intense afflictions and griefs at the loss of his nearest and dearest relations and friends completely broke down his already impaired health,

A secluded and retired life in some salubrious climate was now absolutely necessary for him. About this time, a Bungalow was notified for sale at Deoghur, a most healthy place in upper Bengal. He offered to purchase it, but the terms being immoderately high, he gave up the idea. He then rented a plot of land, very close to Karmatar, a Station midway between Jamtara and Madhupur on the East Indian Railway Line. The place lies in the Santhal Pergunnas. It had, at that time, a somewhat jungly appearance, being covered on all sides with dense woods, and was, in consequence, very well suited to the purpose. He laid out the land, and erected there a nice Bungalow to his mind. In its compound he planted flower plants and fruit trees, and thus turned it to a most comfortable habitation. The poor, savage Santhals were his only neighbours. The Santhals are believed to be one of the aboriginal tribes of India. They are honest and truthful. They soon perceived the flow of natural kindness and benevolence of their new neighbour, and became his objects of love and endearment—his friends and relations. In fact, some of them addressed him father, some brother, some uncle, and so forth. Their poor huts of leaves were overflowed with the flow of Vidyasagar's genial kindness and assumed a gay, cheerful aspect. Vidyasagar supplied them with food in hunger, clothes in nudity, medicine in sickness. He fed them with

delicious fruits and confectionery. In winter, he gave them warm clothes. He was by their sick-bed, drenching them with physic, dieting them with light food, and nursing them with the tenderest care. He kept with him a large supply of Homœopathic drugs for their treatment. The reader is aware that he had acquired a great proficiency in the healing art of Hahnemann. His heart was a fountain of universal love and kindness. Wheresoever he was, there was nothing but love and kindness. In his daily morning walks, he visited the hut of every one of his Santhal neighbours, and very cheerily accepted their little presents of gourd, cucumber, or brinjal. He then returned to his neat and clean villa, accompanied with some of his honest, savage friends, to whom he gave whatever they required. He made them dance their barbarous dances, which gave him an infinite pleasure. In fact, in this country seat he felt a heavenly tranquility and happiness. Not only did he minister to their external improvement and physical comfort, but he also provided for their internal advancement, intellectual culture, and moral correction. For the education of their children, he founded a vernacular school at his own expense.

There were no fish-mongers in the vicinity of the place, as there were very few purchasers of fish. Vidyasagar proclaimed that he would buy all the fish that would be brought to him. The

poor Santhals now found a fresh source of income. They brought to him very large quantities of fish, for which he gave them the price they demanded. He then distributed the fish among the Bengalee gentlemen—officers and servants of the Railway Station and the Post Office. He now and then invited the Babus to dinner, and passed the days that he stayed at the place in merriment. Whenever he went to Karmatar, one of his own children or grandchildren always accompanied him. Sometimes his friends resorted to the place for a change. Vidyasagar received and entertained them hospitably. On one occasion, Pandit Nilmani Nyayalankar being seriously ill, went to Karmatar for restoration of his health. Vidyasagar tended and nursed him with affectionate care. He used to remove the discharges of the patient's bowels and kidneys with his own hands. Nyayalankar felt awkward and ashamed that so great a man should trouble himself with such menial services. But the noble-minded Vidyasagar smiled and said,—‘Never mind, my dear, I pay you in earnest,’ meaning that Nyayalankar would serve him similarly, in case he himself should fall ill. We have already said, that Vidyasagar was very witty, and whenever an opportunity presented itself, he would be sure to give expression to his merry humour. On one occasion, he attended the Governor's *Darbar*, accompanied by four other Pandits. The Pandits saw that all

other Indians had their heads covered with turbans, except the Bengalees. They enquired of Vidyasagar the cause of it. He smiled, and replied,—‘When the Bengalees failed to do anything for their father-land, they gave up wearing turbans and thus lightened the weight of its burden.’ This, was, no doubt, a merry joke, but very cutting indeed.

One Abhiram Mandal, a Santhal, was employed by Vidyasagar as his chief gardener at Karmatar. The poor savage was a great favourite with his master on account of his truthfulness and honesty. Vidyasagar sometimes sent to him clothes for distribution and cash remittances for payment of monthly allowances to the poor Santhals.

The Santhals were quite enamoured of him. Whenever they heard a report of his intended visit, they looked out anxiously for his arrival, and as soon as he arrived, they flocked to him with their little presents—some with gourds, some with cucumbers, some with brinjals, and some with other vegetables of the like nature. A poor Santhal having nothing else to offer to his dear benefactor, brought a cock-fowl for him. Vidyasagar smiled, and producing his holy thread, said to the innocent savage,—‘You see I am a Brahman. I cannot accept your present.’ The poor Santhal at once burst into tears, and insisted on his acceptance of the fowl. Vidyasagar’s

tender heart was moved at the sad disappointment of his poor neighbour, and for his satisfaction received it from his hands. The Santhal felt highly delighted. When he was gone, Vidyasagar set free the fowl. On one occasion, another Santhal came to him, accompanied by a woman of his race. He said to Vidyasagar,—‘Would you give this woman a piece of cloth?’ The latter replied by way of joke,—‘I have no cloth; and why should I give her?’ Santhal.—‘That won’t do; you must give her a piece of cloth.’

Vidyasagar.—‘No. I have none.’

Santhal.—‘Let me have your key. I will open your trunk, and see whether you have got cloth.’

Vidyasagar laughed at the simple familiarity of the savage, and handed his key over to him. The Santhal opened the chest, and cried out in great delight,—‘Why, there is an abundance of cloth here.’ With this, he drew out a piece of nice cloth, and gave it to the woman.

About this time, Vidyasagar had to suffer a most heart-rending affliction at the loss of his most sincere friend, the Hon’ble Dwarka Nath Mitter, a Judge of the Calcutta High Court, who passed away on the 25th February, 1874. The *Englishman*, a leading Anglo-Indian newspaper, in its issue of the 3rd March of the same year, in noticing the lamented death of the deceased Justice, thus said of him:—“ * * *

Amongst his more brilliant qualities was his sur-

prising command of the English language ; the readiness, the precision and the force with which he used that language are not common even among those who speak it as their mother tongue and were the theme of constant admiration."

The two friends were fellow-workers and co-adjutors in many affairs. They consulted each other on all difficult points. The two were generally of the same opinion. Their opinions diverged only in one case—on the question of the right of inheritance of a fallen woman. The case had been instituted in the High Court before Dwarka Nath's death. Before the decision of the case, Pandits Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahes Chandra Nyayratna, and Bharat Chandra Siromani were called upon for their opinions. The point at issue was—if a Hindu widow, who had once inherited a property, subsequently loses her character—whether that fallen woman should be deprived of her inheritance. Vidyasagar was for the inheritance, whilst the other two Pandits were against it. Dwarka Nath was also of opinion that the fallen woman should be deprived of her inheritance, but he could not carry his point. A full bench consisting of ten justices sat to decide the case. Out of the ten, only Mr. Phear agreed with Dwarka Nath. The Hon'ble C. E. Buckland, in his 'Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors,' says :—"The Hindu widow's unchastity case, in which it was contended that property once vested in a

widow can never be divested on the ground of subsequent immorality, had a very strong opponent in Mr. Justice Dwarka Nath, with whom Mr. Justice Phear concurred. But the opinion of the majority prevailed, and the widows were left undisturbed in their course of life." In this connection, Vidyasagar said to one of his friends ; — ' How could I give a wrong opinion ? Supposing I gave one, who should hear me ? Of course, I am not a supporter of lewd character ; but when one had already inherited a property, how could I say, that one should be divested of it ? In that case, there would be no end of litigations on this plea.' It must be said, that in this case Vidyasagar wanted in foresight, and the whole Hindu community was disappointed in him ; but it should be borne in mind, that he gave his opinion according to his own conviction. Some insinuate that Vidyasagar was afraid, that if a fallen widow were deprived of her inheritance, obstacles might rise in the way of the furtherance of his widow marriage cause, and he therefore gave his opinion in favour of the inheritance. But such insinuation is quite baseless. Vidyasagar was not a hypocrite—he was not a man to go astray or to designedly mislead others for the sake of his self-interest. .

Dwarka Nath often said,—'Vidyasagar is the root of my prosperity. It was he who advised me to appear at the Law Examination. But for his advice, I might have taken a different course.'

He had a great fond regard and esteem for Vidyasagar. He is said to have acquired a drinking habit ; but he was always very cautious not to offend his friend by giving him occasion to be aware of his intemperance. He often visited Vidyasagar at the latter's residence after Court hours. When he was a pleader, he appeared before him in his professional dress, and even when he became a Judge, he never felt degrading to present himself before his old friend in his gown. Now and then he passed his nights with Vidyasagar. He was a great help to our benevolent hero in many of his noble deeds, particularly in rescuing the poor tenants from the hands of the oppressive zemindars. When Dwarka Nath was still a pleader, some Brahmans one day came to Vidyasagar and charged their Zemindar, Babu Jaykrishna Mukharji of Uttarpara, with usurpation of their Brahmotra (rent-free) lands. Vidyasagar aided them in their law-suits against their Zemindar. At his instance, Dwarka Nath conducted these cases without fee or remuneration. On one occasion, Dwarka Nath said to his friend,—‘Lest you should think, that I return these cases simply because I am not paid for them, I come to offer my explanation. These people have no title to the lands in dispute. Had there been the slightest evidence in their favour, I would surely have given my life for them.’ Vidyasagar now saw that Jay Krishna was quite blameless in the matter. He had entertained very different

views of the Zemindar, and his esteem for the latter had also lessened a little ; but what he heard from Dwarka Nath served to rekindle his former feelings for the wealthy gentleman. He was afterwards heard to say, that he came to learn subsequently that Jay Krishna never usurped the lands of those who could produce evidence in support of their title. Vidyasagar often praised him for his manly exertions by which he rose to such eminence, and for his very liberal charities. The two had a great intimate familiarity. Vidyasagar always kept himself aloof from politics and political meetings, but he now and then entered the rooms of the British Indian Association, only to have an interview with Jay Krishna Babu.

His health being, at this time, completely broken down, Vidyasagar drew up a Will on the 31st May, 1875. His son, Narayan Chandra, was excluded from inheritance of his assets, which were settled on other lawful heirs in accordance with the Sastras.

It may not be out of place to mention here, that after his death, a case was instituted in the High Court for decision whether Narayan Chandra, being the only son of his father, could be legally debarred from such inheritance according to Hindu Law. The case was decided in favour of Narayan Chandra, who has since inherited the assets of his father.

The Will was drawn up in Bengali. Its lan-

guage is chaste and refined. The document testifies to his generous feelings and high liberalities. For the edification of the reader, we will give its purport in English :—

'1. Be it known that out of my own accord and free will I execute this last Testament of my assets. By this Will, all my previous Wills are made null and void.

'2. Babu Kall Charan Ghosh of Chaugachha, Babu Kshirod Nath Sinha of Pathira, and my nephew (sister's son), Babu Beni Madhav Mukhopadhyay of Paspur—these three persons I appoint executors of my this last Will ; they shall execute every thing in accordance with the provisions of this Will.

'3. On my death, all my assets shall go into the hands of these executors.

'4. For the information of the executors, a schedule of all my present properties is annexed to this Will.

'5. The executors shall liquidate my debts and realise my dues.

'6. The expenses of the maintenance of my dependents and some other helpless kinsfolk and relations, and the performance of some rituals and ceremonials are being defrayed from the income of my property ; my creditors are not such men as to seek to realise their dues by causing a total stoppage of these expenses. With their permission, the executors shall make such arrangements as will keep the under-mentioned stipends current, and at the same time contribute to the realisation of their dues by slow instalments.

'7. It is not possible that, on my death, all the recipients of monthly stated allowances should be awarded stipends at their present rate. A list is given below, determining the monthly stipend payable to each from the income of my property.—

'FIRST CLASS.

'My father, Thakurdas Bandyopadhyay 50 fifty rupees ; my second brother, Dinabandhu Nyayaratna 40 forty rupees ; my third brother, Sambhuchandra Vidyaratna 40 rupees ; my youngest brother, Isan Chandra Bandyopadhyay 30 rupees ; my first sister, Manomohini Devi 10 ten rupees ; my second sister, Digamvari Devi 10 ten rupees ; my youngest sister, Mandakini Devi 10 rupees ; my wife, Dinamayl Devi 30 rupees ; my eldest daughter, Hemlata Devi 15 fifteen rupees ; my second daughter, Kumudini Devi 15 fifteen rupees ; my third daughter, Binodini Devi 15 fifteen rupees ; my youngest daughter, Sarat Kumari Devi 15 fifteen rupees ; daughter-in-law, Bhavasundari Devi 15 fifteen rupees ; grand-daughter (son's daughter), Mrinalini Devi 15 rupees ; elder grand-son (daughter's son), Sures Chandra Samajpatl 15 fifteen rupees ; younger grand-son (daughter's son), Jatis Chandra Samajpatl 15 rupees ; youngest brother's wife, Elokesi Devi 10 rupees ; mother-in-law, Tirasundari Devi 10 rupees ; eldest daughter's mother-in-law, Svarnamayl Devi 10 ten rupees ; eldest daughter's sister-in-law (husband's sister), Kshetramani Devi 10 ten rupees ; daughter of my mother's maternal uncle, Umasundari Devi 3 three rupees ; wife of Gopal Chandra Chatto, grandson of my mother's maternal uncle 3 three rupees ; wife of Trilochan Mukhopadhyay, son of my father's sister 3 three rupees ; daughter of my father's sister, Nistarini Devi 3 three rupees ; Baibahiki, Sarada Devi 5 five rupees ; Madan Mohan Tarkalankar's mother 8 eight rupees ; Madan Mohan Basu's wife, Nrityakali Dasi 10 ten rupees ; Madhu Sudan Ghosh's wife, Thakamani Dasi 10 ten rupees ; Kali Krishna Mitra of Barasat 30 thirty rupees ; after Kali Krishna's death, his widow, Umes Mohini Dasi 10 ten rupees ; Sriram Pragnik's wife, Bhgavati Dasi 2 two rupees.

‘SECOND CLASS.

‘Son of my mother’s sister, Sarvvesvar Bandyopadhyay 10 ten rupees ; my sister’s daughter Mokshada Devi 5 five rupees ; my first sister’s *Nanad* (husband’s sister), Tara-
mani Devi 5 five rupees ; daughter of my father’s sister,
Mokshada Devi 2 two rupees ; son of the sister of my
mother’s mother, Syama Charan Ghoshal 5 five rupees ;
family of Ramesvar Mukhopadhyay, son of the sister of my
mother’s father, 5 five rupees ; daughter of my mother’s
maternal uncle, Barada Devi 2 two rupees ; widow of Nabin
Kṛishna Mitra of Barasat, Syamasundari Dasi 10 ten
rupees ; Madan Mohan Tarkalankar’s daughter, Kundamala
Devi 10 rupees ; Madan Mohan Tarkalankar’s sister,
Bamasundari Devi 3 three rupees ; widow of Pyarichand
Mitra of Burdwan, Kamini Dasi 10 ten rupees.

‘8. If the executors see that the payment of monthly allowance to any of the second class stipendiaries is not necessary, that is, if they consider that he or she can manage without the stipend, then they shall be at liberty to withhold his or her stipend.

‘9 If the sons and daughters of my second and third daughter that will be existing at the time of my death, should from any cause whatsoever be too inconvenienced to defray the expenses of their maintenance, education, &c., then each of them shall get a monthly stipend of 15 fifteen rupees up to the age of 22 twenty-two years.

‘10. If any of those of my grandsons and grand-daughters (whether they be issues of my son or daughters) that will be living at the time of my death should be physically defective from blindness, lameness, &c., or should have any incurable disease, then he or she shall get a monthly stipend of 10 ten rupees from the income of my property for whole life.

‘11. If my second or youngest sister should be widowed

before any of her sons is competent to earn a living, then from the proceeds of my property she shall get a monthly stipend of 20 twenty rupees in addition to the stipend stipulated in the seventh clause, until such time as any of her sons should be able to earn.

'12. If Nrityakali Dasi should be widowed before any of her sons is competent to earn a living, then from the income of my property she shall get a monthly stipend of 10 ten rupees in excess of the stipend stipulated in the seventh clause, until such time as any of her sons should be able to earn.

'13. From the proceeds of my property, the executors shall pay a monthly stipend of 30 thirty rupees to Sarada Devi, widow of Nilmadhav Bhattacharyya, for the maintenance of herself and of her three sons ; and when her sons will attain majority, the executors shall pay her 10 ten rupees monthly for her whole life. But if she should remarry or lead an immoral life, they shall pay her neither of the two aforesaid allowances.

'14. A list is given below of the monthly expenses for different affairs that are to be defrayed from the proceeds of my property ;—

' School established by me at my native village, Birsingha, 100 hundred rupees. Dispensary established by me at Birsingha 50 fifty rupees. Helpless and poor people of Birsingha 30 thirty rupees. Widow Marriage 100 one hundred rupees.

'15. If Jagannath Chattopadhyay, Upendra Nath Palit, and Govinda Chandra Bhar should remain in my service till the last moment of my life, then the executors shall give to each of them a lump sum of 300 three hundred rupees.

'16. The executors will defray the costs of the up-keep of my property, the marriage of my daughter, &c., to the amounts they think fit.

‘ 17. If the provisions and arrangements made by me should not suit the person or affair on whose behalf they are made, then the provisions and arrangements which my executors will make, after taking the matter into their serious consideration, shall be binding and valid as if made by myself.

‘ 18. If the income from my property should in future be less than what it is at the present time, then the executors shall be at liberty to make less payments than what are settled by me.

‘ 19. If any necessity should arise, the executors shall be at liberty to sell any share of my property.

‘ 20. The books of my own composition and those published by me are being sold from the Sanskrit Press Depository ; I earnestly wish that, so long as Babu Braja Nath Mukhopadhyay will be living and will remain proprietor of the said Depository, my publications should be sold from that place : but if the system under which the business of the Depository is being managed should run into disorder, and if in consequence thereof, the executors should see that much loss is accrued or inconvenience is felt, then the executors shall be at liberty to arrange for the sale of the publications from some other place.

‘ 21. The executors shall act unanimously, and in cases of difference of opinion, the majority shall prevail.

‘ 22. If any of the executors should die or refuse to act in accordance with the provisions of this Will, then the other two executors shall appoint a third executor in his place. Such appointed executor shall have all the powers as if appointed by myself.

‘ 23. If the executors appointed by me should be unwilling or unable to take charge of the execution of this Will, then those that are entitled to receive allowances in accordance with the provisions of this Will, shall apply to Law Court.

and have a competent executor appointed. The executor thus appointed shall execute everything according to the provisions of this Will.

' 24. Until my debts are cleared off, the charge of everything shall continue in the hands of the executors appointed under the provisions of this Will. When the debts will have been paid off, those lawful heirs that will be existing at the time, shall inherit all my assets and shall enjoy the proceeds after paying the stipends determined by the seventh, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, fourteenth, and fifteenth clauses. When those heirs will attain majority, the executors shall make over everything to the heirs, and then retire.

25. * * * * * I have given up all connection and intercourse with my son * * * Narayan Chandra Bandyopadhyay. In consequence of this, in determining the stipends, his name has been excluded, and in consequence thereof, although he should be living when the debts will have been cleared off, he should not be reckoned as my heir in accordance with the provisions of the twenty-fourth clause, or he shall not be appointed executor in accordance with the twenty-third clause. Those that would become my heirs unless he should be living when the debts will have been cleared off in accordance with the determination of the twenty-fourth clause, shall inherit my assets although he should be living at the time. Dated the 18th Jyaishta, 1282 B. E., corresponding with the 31st May, 1875 A. D.

Sd. 'Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar

'At present residing in Calcutta.

'WITNESSES.

Sd. 'Raj Krishna Mukhopadhyay.

" 'Radhika Prasanna Mukhopadhyay.

" 'Giris Chandra Vidyaratna.

" 'Syama Charan De.

" 'Nil Madhav Sen.

" 'Joges Chandra De.

" 'Bihari Lal Bhaduri.

" 'Kali Charan Ghosh.

'All residing in Calcutta.

'SCHEDULE OF PROERTY MENTIONED IN THE FOURTH CLAUSE :—

'(A). One-third share of the Sanskrit Press.

'(B). Books of my own composition and those published by me.

'BENGALI :—

'(1) Barnaparichaya, Parts I and II. (2) Kathamala ; (3) Bodhodaya ; (4) Charitavali ; (5) Akhyanamamjari, Parts I and II. ; (6) Bangalar Itihas, Part II. ; (7) Jivana-Charita ; (8) Vetala-Panchavinsati ; (9) Sakuntala ; (10) Sitar Vanavas ; (11) Bhranti Vilasa ; (12) Mahabharata ; (13) Sanskrita Bhasha Prastava ; (14) Bidhava-Vivaha Vichara ; (15) Bahuvivaha Vichara.

'SANSKRIT :—

'(1) Upakramanika ; (2) Vyakarana Kaumudi ; (3) Rijupatha, 3 Parts ; (4) Meghaduta ; (5) Sakuntala ; (6) Uttara-Charita.

'ENGLISH :—

'(1) Poetical Selections. (2) Selections from Goldsmith. (3) Selections from English Literature.

(C) 'Books whose copy-right has been purchased :—

'(1) Sisu Siksha, Part I., II., III. by Madan, Mohan Tarkalankar.

(2) Kulina-Kula-Sarvasva by Ram Narayan Tarkaratna.

'(D) Kadambari ; Annotated Valmiki's Ramayan and other Sanskrit works published by me.

'(E) Library of Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi, Persian, and other books collected for my own use.

'(F) Bungalow and Garden at Karmatar,

Sd. 'Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar.'

The Will made no mention of stock of any kind or money in hard cash. As for ready money, Vidyasagar had never had a considerable amount in his purse. As for stocks, he could never make means to procure. Till the last day of his life, he had an income of upwards of four thousand rupees a month, every pice of which he spent on charitable and benevolent purposes. It is said that at the time of his death, he could leave only 15 or 16 thousand rupees. There can be no doubt, that but for his liberal charities he could have amassed and left *lakhs* of rupees. He made no provisions in his Will for the worship of Hindu gods and goddesses, which clearly indicated which way the wind blew.

On the 13th July, 1875, Vidyasagar married his third daughter, Binodini Devi, to Suryya Kumar Adhikari B. A., a graduate of the Calcutta University. This son-in-law was dearer to him than his own children. After the estrangement of his son, Narayan Chandra, he bestowed his whole paternal affection on Suryya Kumar. He was a teacher in the Hare School. In the year 1876, Vidyasagar appointed him Secretary to the Metropolitan Institution, and afterwards* made him Principal of the College.

In the latter part of 1875, our hero had to suffer a most painful calamity in the death of his very dear friend, Pyari Charan Sarkar, who was a Professor of English in the Presidency College

at Calcutta. The two were most intimately attached to each other. Both were engaged in what they sincerely believed to be the social reforms for this country. It was this Pyari Charan, who had published an appeal in the Education Gazette, of which he was the editor, calling upon the public for contributions towards the liquidation of Vidyasagar's debts, alluded to before. That Vidyasagar should be heartily grieved at the loss of such a sincere friend and fellow-worker is not at all strange. The depth of his grief will be evident from the under-quoted letter, which he addressed at the time to doctor Bhooban Mohun Sircar.

“ My dear Bhoobun Mohun,

“ I regret exceedingly that in the present state of my health, of which you are aware, I am unable to attend this evening's meeting of the Bengal Temperance Society. No one knows better than yourself the profound grief with which the lamented death of my beloved friend, Babu Pyari Charan Sircar, has filled me. We knew each other from early youth, and we were so closely attached, that in him I have lost a dear and affectionate brother. To the public the loss cannot be easily replaced. His great ability, high character and single-minded zeal in work of humanity rendered him highly useful to society at large, whilst his devotedness to the cause of temperance, which was manifested in the foundation of the Bengal Temperance

Society, in the publication of very many valuable tracts in English and Bengali and in other acts, will doubtless be long cherished in grateful remembrance by all lovers and promoters of temperance in this country.

" 27 Nov, 1875. " I remain yours affectionately
(Sd) " Isvar Chandra Sarma."

We embrace this opportunity to say a few words in connection with the Society referred to in Vidyasagar's letter quoted above. No sane man can question the incalculable good the British Government has done to this country. May we ever live in peace under the benign rule which was so providentially offered to us, when the country was groaning under the miseries of anarchy. But, at the same time, no man of sense can deny that Europeans have been, in a manner, eating away the vitals of the land by bringing in with them the alcoholic poison of Europe. With the foundation of the British rule in India, most of the natives of the upper classes, in endeavouring to imitate the manners and practices of their rulers, whose peculiarities in every respect fascinated them, imbibed their habits of drinking spirituous liquors and wines. During those early days, we are deeply pained to say, most of the highly educated and influential promising youths of the country succumbed prematurely to the dreadfully fatal effects of the evil practice, who, but for it, might have lived to a good old age and done

infinite good to their father-land. To demonstrate the truth of our statement, we could give an exhaustive catalogue of the names of those gentlemen, but out of respect for their departed souls, we forbear.

Babu Pyari Charan Sarkar was profoundly grieved at this state of things, and he was firmly resolved upon adopting some means to uproot this baneful vice, which was slowly undermining the Indian Society. It was mainly through his exertions, that "The Bengal Temperance Society" was formed at Calcutta in the beginning of 1864. Vidyasagar and some other influential and leading personages joined the Society since its very foundation. Raja Radha Kanta Dev Bahadur, in a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Society, congratulated him on its establishment. He "hailed with joy the inauguration of this Society, promised to take the deepest interest in its progress, and to give his cordial concurrence to all measures it may adopt for the eradication of the dreadful vice, and the reclaiming of those who have succumbed to its influence."

At the inauguration meeting of this Society, were present Woodrow, Dall, Vidyasagar, Pyari Charan Sarkar, the Hon'ble Sambhu Nath Pandit, Dr. Gurudas Banarji, and a number of respectable gentlemen of station and influence, European, American and Indian. After several gentlemen had delivered their speeches, Pyari Charan re-

requested his friend, Vidyasagar, to say something, but he moved his head, indicating his unwillingness. Subsequently, Dall, Woodrow, Sambhu Nath, and some others also urged him to speak, but nothing could move the resolute Vidyasagar to stand on his legs. In fact, our hero always judged his own merits rightly. He was fully aware of his incapacity of making speeches in public meetings, and he was not prepared to stand himself a laughing-stock of the company. Besides, he was a true appreciator of merits, and he was ever glad to see the right man in the right place. It was this characteristic of his innate nature that served to make him so much attached to Michael M. Datta in spite of his many frailties, and to select Krishto Das Pal for the editorship of the Hindoo Patriot.

It is needless to say, that Vidysagar was a teetotaler and a great enemy of taking intoxicating drinks and other similar vices. Most of his friends, therefore, who had acquired the evil habit more or less, always stood in awe of him. It was for this reason, that his great friend Dwarka Nath Mitter, who, it is said, was given to drinking habits, conducted himself very carefully in his dealings with our hero. The letter quoted below, written to him by one of his particular and influential friends shows how bitterly he hated these vices and how his acquaintances always tried to prove to him the immaculateness of their moral character. For decency's sake, we will suppress all names.

"Having heard the conversation you had with my friend * * * yesterday evening it becomes indispensably necessary for me to give you a detailed account of my conduct in the garden party complained of.

"The fact -was that I accompanied by Baboos * * *, and * * * reached the place at 9 P. M. on the night previous. Some of my friends pressed me to drink, I protested, pleaded ill health, but finding them too importunate to be refused did at length take two sips. The quantity imbibed was literally not more than a *kutchra*, the remainder of the liquid in the glass being somehow managed to be poured down upon the floor. This was the actual extent of my drunkenness on that night. The following morning I was again pressed to drink, but I *steadfastly refused*. Now as to the other and more serious part of the charge that has been brought against me by * * *, circumstanced as I was I had no other alternative but to remain where I was. To return home at that hour of the night would have been exceedingly inconvenient, and even if it were otherwise I did not like to play the *Puritan* unnecessarily. Several times I attempted to run away into an adjoining room but was on each occasion compelled to come back by sheer physical force. That I did not quit the company that very instant, is the only impropriety I have been guilty of, but beyond that I can most solemnly aver that I did not by my act, word or

even gesture in any manner encourage or even countenance the proceedings. * * * I whiled away my time as best I could tell. About half past twelve or one O'clock, when dinner was ready, I finished my meal as hastily as possible, ran to the *Bytuckhana* before every other member of the party and locked myself up *alone* in a separate room for the rest of the night."

We have already said, that Vidyasagar did not visit Benares for some length of time after his mother's death. By the latter end of 1875, he received a letter from his father, who was living in the holy shrine, to the following effect:—

'My best blessings on you!—

'I am now 83 years old; in this my decrepit state, my memory generally fails me. You are the eldest of my descendants; you have been providing for my maintenance and defraying other expenses. I now wish to see your face. I would therefore ask you to come to me without much loss of time, if you are in sound health.

'Your well-wisher

Sd. 'Thakurdas Deva-Sarma.'

Vidyasagar at once proceeded to Benares, where he stayed with his father for a few days, and after providing for every comfort and ease of his old parent, returned to Calcutta. On the 26th March, 1876, information reached him that his father was seriously ill. He hastened to Benares, and the other inmates of his family followed him one by one,

On the 11th April following, old Thakurdas departed from this world of troubles, leaving his children and grand-children and a numerous family to mourn over his death. Vidyasagar had always the highest esteem and reverence for his parents ; he idolised them, who were his sole gods of worship. He had already lost one of the two—his mother, and had the other left to him for his solace. When he lost that other too, he saw nothing but blank vacancy—nothing but pitch dark, all about him. His grief knew no bounds. The usual calm fortitude of the strong-minded, highly talented Vidyasagar was swept away by the vigorous current of his excessive grief. He wept and lamented bitterly like an insensate child. In excess of his grief, he had forgotten that the corpse of his dear parent was lying before him and that the funeral rites had yet to be performed. When he was reminded of his duties of the time, he assumed a somewhat calm external appearance, and then carried the dead body to the Manikarnika Ghat on the shores of the Ganges. Many outsiders offered their help, but Vidyasagar prevented them with kind and gentle words. After finishing the cremation and *Tarpana* ceremonies, he returned to his father's quarters, and seeing his father's room empty, again fell to crying and lamenting in most pitiful terms. No one knew how to console him.

Thakurdas was a devoutly religious man. He was honest, truthful, and resolutely firm in

purpose. He performed all his household duties from a religious point of view. It was his highest sense of duty that led him to provide for the education of his sons in spite of his great pecuniary difficulties. James Mill has immortalised his name in the annals of European history by providing for the proper education of John Stuart Mill. Poor Thakurdas has also perpetuated his name in the pages of Indian history by giving his son the means of acquiring a sound scholastic knowledge. John Stuart Mill felt himself an orphan at the loss of his dear father. Vidyasagar also had a sorrowful feeling of helpless vacancy at the loss of his beloved father. So there is a great deal of similarity between the two pairs. Thakurdas provided not only for the education of his sons, but also aided the performance of different religious ceremonies by the female members of his household with gifts of money from his slender income. It was all these attributes and conduct of his parents that had chiefly served to help Vidyasagar in the formation of his noble character. Vidyasagar had once spoken to Babu Isvar Chandra Ghoshal, Deputy Magistrate of Jehanabad, of the persecutions and ill-treatments accorded to Thakurdas and his party by the opponents of widow marriage. On one occasion, the said Deputy Magistrate paid a visit to Birsingha, where he was hospitably entertained by Thakurdas. At last, he asked his host for the names of the opponents

of widow marriage who persecuted him. Thakurdas smiled, and said,—‘Vidyasagar lives in Calcutta ; he might have spoken to you from hearsay. Do not do anything from such hearsay. I have nothing to complain against these people ; towards me they always behave in a friendly manner.’ With this, he pacified the Deputy Magistrate on the one hand, and on the other, he sent for the villagers privately, and warned them that the Deputy Magistrate had heard of the outrages of the opponents of widow marriage and that he had asked for their names, but that he (Thakurdas) had given no names. He therefore advised them to pay him friendly visits before the Deputy Magistrate, which would serve to soften the embittered feelings of the judicial officer. Are not such instances of noble and forgiving patience rare in this world ?

On the second day of his father’s death (*i. e.* on the 12th April, 1876), Vidyasagar had a very severe Diarrhoea with the symptoms of Cholera. His relations and friends at Benares were afraid of his life. His immediate removal to Calcutta was decided upon by them. He at first refused to be removed, because his beloved father had desired him to perform the *Sraddha* ceremonies at the sacred place of the last days of his life. But the use of medicines being forbidden during the prescribed period of a Hindu’s mourning for his parent, the disease took a serious turn, which compelled him

to return to Calcutta. Here he recovered in a few days, and at the end of the prescribed period, performed the usual rites of his father's *Sraddha*. He then led a secluded life for some time. When he regained sufficient strength to undertake a journey, he again went to Benares and there fulfilled the last wishes of his dear parent—performed his *Sraddha* with great pomp, feasted many Brahmans and the hungry, and distributed alms to the poor and the needy.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LOSS OF CONSORT.

By the end of 1876, the construction of his own house at Sukea's Street was brought to perfection. The neat, nice building with a small garden attached to it cost him a good round sum. In the beginning of the next year (1877), he removed himself to this comfortable abode with only his Library. But no suitable house being available in the neighbourhood for the accommodation of the other members, he was at last obliged to live with all his family in the new building.

In this year, he married his fourth daughter, Sarat Kumari Devi, to Kartik Chandra Chattopadhyay. Both the daughter and her husband lived in the same house and mess with Vidyasagar, who loved them and their children very dearly.

About this time, his health, which had already

been impaired, began gradually to sink. Continued illness for some years, aggravated by the most distressing afflictions at the loss of those nearest and dearest to his heart, began to tell on him very seriously. He was reduced in flesh ; his body took the form of a skeleton. He gave up his toilsome works, one by one. He could not bear the hustle and turmoil of the city. He frequented other salubrious places. Karmatar was his general resort. But the thoughts of his educational institutions never forsook him. No doubt, he had made over the management of the Metropolitan Institution to his son-in-law, Suryya Kumar, and delegated to him some of his anxieties in that respect, but he could not entirely shake them off. The reader has already been told how, through his exertions, the Metropolitan Institution was affiliated to the Calcutta University up to the B. A. Standard in 1879, and up to the B. L. Standard in 1882. Under a rule of the University, college students intending to appear at its examinations are required to keep a certain percentage of attendance at the College lectures. Vidyasagar was very strict in the observance of this rule. He warned the professors of his Institution to observe the rule faithfully, and if he ever found any one deviating in the slightest degree, he would not fail to censure the culprit most severely.

Vidyasagar now applied himself diligently to

the construction of a building for the main Institution. By the end of 1886, the construction was completed, and in January of the following year, the College was removed to the new building, at Sankar Ghose's Lane. The purchase of the site and the erection of the house cost him about a *lakh* and a half of rupees.

In 1885, the Metropolitan Institution stood first at the B. A. Examination. In this year, he opened a Branch Metropolitan School at Barabazar, and in 1887, another Branch was opened at Bowbazar.

On the New year's day of the year 1880, Vidyasagar was honoured by Government with the title of C. I. E. He was always averse to titular distinctions of Government, and was, therefore, not inclined to receive the title. After much persuasion, he was induced to accept it, but he did not attend the presentation Darbar to receive the *Sanad*. The words inscribed on the grant were :—
"Grant of the dignity of a Companion of the order of Indian Empire to Pundit Iswara Chandra Vidyasgar."

Before that, the Government of Sir Richard Temple, a Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, had granted him, on the 1st January, 1877, a certificate of honour. It ran as follows :—"To Pundit Iswara Chandra Vidyasagara in recognition of his earnestness as leader of the widow marriage movement, and position as leader of the more advanced portion of the Indian Community."

Since the year 1882, Vidyasagar's *Rijupatha, Part III*, was discarded from the course of studies prescribed for the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University. It had been a text-book uninterruptedly for the sixteen previous years. The exclusion of the book from the curriculum of the University reduced his income to a great extent, and somewhat inconvenienced him; but he did not lose heart. He had already promised increment of pay to some of his school-masters. They were a little disheartened at the decrease of their master's income. But Vidyasagar did not wholly disappoint them. By other means he raised funds for the purpose. God always helps the accomplishment of honest and benevolent deeds.

In November, 1884, Vidyasagar visited Cawnpore, a city in the North-Western Provinces of India, for a change of climate. He stayed there for a few days only, and by the end of the year, he returned to Calcutta.

On the 1st January, 1885, he sold away the one-third share of his proprietary right to the Sanskrit Press, which had been left to him, to Babu Raj Krishna Banarji at a price of 5,000 rupees. He had been disgusted with the business. Besides, the sale proceeds went a great way to liquidate his debts. His books brought him a revenue of between three to four thousand rupees a month. The Hon'ble C. E. Buckland, in his

‘Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors,’ says ;—
“Vidyasagar’s monthly benefactions amounted to about Rs 1,500 and his income from his publications for several years ranged from Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,500 month.” Before his death, he had repaid all his debts. He left his property quite free from embarrassments. He had borrowed monies from many creditors, but he paid them off, one by one. Vidyasagar was very honest in all his dealings, particularly in the liquidation of his debts. He owed a heavy debt to Government. But the Government knew nothing of it. They had quite forgotten it. There was no such item entered in their accounts as due by Vidyasagar. He repaid the debt out of his own motion, which amounted to 4,911 rupees, 11 annas and three pies, inclusive of interest. It is said, that the money was advanced to Vidyasagar, when he was Principal of the Sanskrit College, with a view to the publication of Arithmetic, History, and other works, and to their sale at a cheap price. The ends were not satisfied, but the money had already been spent.

About this time, a great difference arose between Maharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore, and his younger brother, Raja Saurindra Mohan Tagore, with respect to their patrimony. They found it impossible to settle the matter between themselves, and appointed Vidyasagar to be their umpire for the division of their properties. On the 7th May, 1885, the two brothers executed a deed

of arbitration in favour of Vidyasagar. The instrument was written in Bengali. We will give its purport in English :—

‘The Much-Respected Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar.

‘Sir,

‘We, the undersigned two brothers, have so long been living conjointly ; but we now find a deal of inconvenience to live in a joint family. It is therefore necessary that we should live separate, and, as a matter of consequence, the partition of our properties is unavoidable. We do not think that an amicable settlement of everything between ourselves to the satisfaction of both parties is possible. We, therefore, do hereby appoint you our arbitrator, and authorise you to make a partition of all our properties, both movable and immovable, after hearing everything from both of us, and making a minute enquiry. We, both, do hereby solemnly declare, that we will abide by your partition, and raise no objections to it. If we should raise any objection, it shall be null and void. On these understandings we execute this deed of arbitration out of our own free will. You will, please, make the partition within three months from this date. Dated 25th Baisakh, 1292 B. E.

Sd. ‘Jatindra Mohan Tagore,

‘Saurindra Mohan Tagore.’

Vidyasagar tried his best to decide the dispute.

He had procured all the papers connected with the properties, bestowed his best thoughts on the subject, and, with infinite toil, examined the papers; but for several reasons he found it very difficult to carry out the settlement of the difference. On the 28th June of that year, he wrote a letter to the two brothers, relinquishing his charge of arbitration. The letter ran to the following effect : —

‘Sirs,

‘Accept my best compliments.

‘I was intrusted with the settlement of the dispute about the partition of your properties. But in the mean time, many causes have sprung up, which have made me so much disgusted with it, that I am no more disposed to toil in the affair. I, therefore, beg to inform you, though with deep regret, that I forbear from this business. It has not been my luck to win reputation and sincere happiness by the settlement of your dispute. Dated 15th Asharh, 1292 B. E.

Sd. ‘Isvar Chandra Sarma.’

Some time after this, he severed his connection with the Sanskrit Press Depository. This was owing to difference of opinion. On the 1st December, 1885, he took away all his publications from the Depository, and placed them in his own Book-Shop, which he named “The Calcutta Library”. It is now located in Sukea’s Street, and all his publications are sold from this place.

About this time, he made acquaintance of Mr.

Ramesh Chandra Dutt, a covenanted Indian Civil Servant (now retired), and translator of the *Rig-Veda*. He was then engaged in the act of editing the work. Vidyasagar was, at that time, unwell, and Mr. Dutt often called at his residence to see him. One day, in course of conversation, Vidyasagar said to him,—‘My dear, you have engaged yourself in a very good work ; please, finish it. Should I feel myself a little better, I will help you, if I can.’ But he was not destined to carry out his wishes. Mr. Ramesh Chandra Dutt is said to have admitted it in the *Nabyabharat*, a Bengali monthly.

Our hero had now to encounter a most heart-rending misfortune in the bereavement of his beloved wife, Dinamayi Devi, who breathed her last on the 13th August, 1888. She had been suffering for some time from acute Dysentery of a very severe type. A few minutes before her death, she began striking her forehead with her fist. Her eldest daughter, Hemlata, who was by her bedside, tending her with watchful care, called out to her father, saying,—‘Papa, mother wishes to speak to you. Would you, please, hear her ?’ Vidyasagar replied,—‘O yes, I see, what it is ; her wishes shall be satisfied ; no fear for that.’ Babu Bihari Lal Sarkar says that the striking of the fist against her forehead was simply to ask forgiveness for her dear son, and that when she was given hopes, she departed from this world happily. But we are

inclined to think that there was something more than mere asking of forgiveness. Most probably, in her last moments she wished to have a look at her beloved child's face, whom she had not seen for some time. Be that as it might, Vidyasagar was, after this mournful event, more favourably disposed to his son. Another potent cause had also sprung up, which served a great deal to soften his rigorous feelings. Two months before this sad catastrophe befell him, he had received a most sincerely penitent letter from Narayan Chandra imploring his forgiveness in utmost pitiful terms. The epistle was couched in a most pathetic language, which moved his naturally tender heart. The letter, which was written in Bengali, ran to the following effect :—

‘Accept my most humble and respectful salutes.

‘By the grace of your feet, I have got everything ; I am earning some money ; there is no lack of respect ; in fact, to all outward appearance I am very happy. But a venomous insect stings my heart day and night. I have given up fancy dress ; I have no other desire in my mind ; only an eager desire to serve your feet has wholly engrossed my mind. My former errors always rise to memory and afflict me with penitence. Oh ! how I wish I would not have been guilty of those sins at my father's feet ! I have been reaping the fruit of my own errors. Had I been at your feet, how

would I have been reckoned, and what I am now ! I am mean in Society. I have put up with all this. But what can be more misfortune to me than that I cannot attend your sick-bed in this your advanced age ? I have been unable to fulfil the chiefest duty of my life. On one occasion, when you were going to serve your father's feet at Benares, one of your friends tried to prevent you, saying,—‘ Vidyasar, you intend going to Benares in this hot season ; there is every fear of danger.’ You at once replied cheerfully,—‘I am going to do my duty ; fear of life should have no consideration at such a time.’ From that very moment, those heavenly words of the great man have been engraved in my heart. I am, at the present day, debarred from the accomplishment of that duty by my own faults.

‘ I do not at present want to approach you. When you are unwilling to cast your eyes at the face of this mean person, how can I venture to go to stand beside or before you ? I will remain near, but hidden from your view. When you will require the services of a servant, I will call the servant to you ; when you will require any one to send to some place, I will go there like a servant. I will remain like a domestic ; if, by degrees, you are favourably disposed to give your permission, I will approach you ; otherwise, I will lie on one side like a dog. Whatever I may be, I am your son. I too have passed my

middle age. You have got a grandson (son's son). If he should live to an age, he must be known to the world by your name. If you cast me aside by a thrust of your feet, how will my son venture to appear before Society? It would be far better, if you will trample him to death, as you have already trampled upon me. Death is preferable to the living of a detested life. I would have clasped death long ago, but sweet-spoken, encouraging hopes have sustained my life. One can never give up hopes of being forgiven by one's parents. This is my destiny in this world ; but, please, do not block up my way to the after-world (i. e. salvation). If I cannot serve your feet, how can I expect salvation in the next world? I would request you to drive away wrath and ill-feeling from your mind, and then to think over seriously with your saintly sweetness and magnanimity of heart, whether any blame will not attach to your world-renowned good name, if you cast adrift your unworthy child. How can I ever give place to such a thought in my mind that he, who is the receptacle of patient fortitude, whose heart is the seat of forgiveness, in whom affection is an ever-conspicuous element, who is moved to an incessant flow of tears at the tale of other people's distress—that such a merciful great man should cast adrift his unfortunate, penitent, sincerely grieved, only son.

'O father, my life has been fortunate, even if it

was only for a day. After my marriage, you were pleased to write in reply to your third brother's letter,—‘By contracting this marriage out of his own motion, Narayan Chandra has added to the glory of my name. In fact, I consider myself fortunate that Narayan Chandra has entered into this alliance.’ Father, what greater fortune or happiness is desirable in this life? That was my heavenly bliss. You are my king of kings, my world-respected father, and I am your base, unworthy son; if, by my act, I have been able to generate pleasurable feelings in your noble heart even for a single moment, I have been most fortunate. O father,—alas! I address you in this letter repeatedly with the word—father, this address sends a thrilling sensation through my frame; but I have not the good luck in this life to call you by the sweet address—papa. When Pyari* calls me *papa*, my heart dances in delight, but at the next instant, that delight turns itself to deep sorrow; an eager desire to call you *papa* rises in my mind, but at the very moment, the thought that I have been deprived of that privilege—the vain hope damps my spirits. And a sudden idea strikes me that, instead of my unfortunate self, if you had had a son to your mind, then he might have, like Pyari, caused you a great delight by calling you *papa*. But I being born to be your unfortunate

*Pyari—Narayan Chandra's son.

son, I have thrown obstacles to all your happiness. How I wish I would have died, though born.

'You, being alone, have been put to a deal of inconvenience and trouble. Had Gopal* been living now, he could have kept all sides safe.

In consequence, though you are surrounded by a numerous family, you are alone. Your son, son-in-laws, brothers,—if any one of these were equal to your mind, you could have left charge with him, and in illness could have lived a retired, secluded life free from anxieties. Whenever I recall to my mind your thinned limbs, pale face, and enfeebled voice,—and over and above that, your anxieties and troubles for others—when I recall to my mind how you go to Karmatar with only a servant for your companion, it strikes me, why should I be still living? How I wish I could draw out my tongue and commit suicide for my own faults.

'That great man, that seat of patient fortitude, that peerless great man, that demigod, who at one time displayed uncommon forbearance by devouring a cock-roach at meal time, for fear lest the eating of other people's meals should be spoiled—how strange, that great man, though possessed of such extraordinary powers, does not forgive his own son! However serious an offence might be, it is

*Gopal Chandra Somajpati—Vidyasagar's eldest son-in-law.

most trivial before forgiveness—particular in the eyes of a parent. If you give me shelter under your feet, no body will blame you; on the contrary, it will display your greatness. In fine, if you should be pleased once more to display your uncommon magnanimity and employ your own unfortunate son to serve your feet, then you shall see whether I can be up to your mind. Whether good or bad, my unfortunate self am the first of all your relations. What have you not done for every one? I would humbly request you once more to display your extraordinary forgiveness and give this unfortunate person one more trial by giving him a little place at your feet; I dare say, I will never for an instant do anything that will cause you displeasure. I will give up every worldly comfort; I will sustain my life by eating a handful of rice, only to serve your feet. As a dog is satisfied with a handful of rice and follows its master, so this unfortunate person will lie at his master's feet, even lower than a dog.

‘Your

‘Unfortunate son.’

Shortly after his mother's death, Narayan Chandra addressed to his august father another letter in the same pitiful strain as before. This was also in Bengali. We will give here its purport in English:—

‘Accept my best respects and compliments,

‘O my godly father, I have already informed

you of my afflictions ; I had a great mind this time, therefore, to throw myself at your feet, and determine the good or evil turn of my unhappy luck. But cruel destiny has shattered this unfortunate person's that unhappy luck into a thousand pieces.

'But for your kind treatment, O my merciful father, the loss of my affectionate mamma would have rendered me quite helpless, — would have made me shed incessant tears and wander about the streets like a motherless child, as I am. Since I was separated from the protection of your feet, I was living under the shelter of my mother's feet,—was solacing my bereft heart with the sweet calls of 'mamma', but when that mother ascended to heaven, leaving her unfortunate son in this world of trouble, when I was feeling a blank vacancy all about me, at that disastrous moment you were pleased to give this unhappy child shelter under your noble feet. That kindness of yours gave me strength to bear through the grief for my mother. Could I ever hope even in dream, that you would show so much kindness to this unlucky fellow. I believed that this unhappy person's lamp of fortune had been put out for ever. This time, I ventured to stand before you, was encouraged to speak to you though only a few words, was permitted to sleep on the second floor of your house ; one evening, when I was asking for lunch, you were downstairs,—the words reached your ears, and you at once called out to Hemlata,

and said,—‘O Bhimi,* your brother asks for lunch ; at the words, how my sad heart bounced up in ecstasy ! In my heart of hearts I feel an inexpressible delight. I have been what is called intoxicated with joy. As a man, who has been without food for a considerable length of time, feels an indescribable delight to eat a delicious meal, so my heart of hearts has felt an inexpressible pleasure to drink your sweet words after the lapse of 14 long years. At each display of your kindness, tears of ecstasy trickled down my breast. Oh ! how I wished that my unhappy mother had witnessed this display of mercy,—alas ! the thought rends my heart. O mother, open your eyes, if for once only, and see that your unfortunate Narayan has found shelter under his father’s feet. Mamma, even in your last moments, you were eagerly anxious for your unfortunate child, and said,—‘Send master (husband) to me ; before I close my eyes for ever, let me reveal to him the sorrows of my mind cherished for these 12 years.’ Now, mother, see that the merciful ‘master’ has been fulfilling your last wishes. O mother, see how father is anxious for you. The more I think of my mother’s affection, the more is my heart pierced with grief.

‘ I consider myself fortunate at what mercy you have already shown to me. I shall now be able to

* A term of sweet, affectionate address applied to Hemjata by her lovely father.

die happily with the consolation that father has forgiven his guilty, but penitent, child. O ! how I longed for your forgiveness, how I wished I could throw myself at your noble feet and shed sorrowful tears of repentance ; but I could not venture to take that step ; as I knew you were deeply afflicted with griefs. I can no more live separated from your venerable feet. That flower of feeling in my heart, which was already withered, has been made by your favour to show signs of life and expansion. Can I live separate any more ? I will not vex you in the least ; I do not wish for authority, riches, or anything else ; I only wish I could lie at your feet. I will prepare your *hookha*, brush your shoe, make your bedding, accompany you in your travels like a servant with your luggage on my head. I declare by your holy feet and those of my deceased mother that I have no other desire in my mind. I shall be content to live like Matadin. Whatever might occur in your house, however I might have to suffer at the hands of others, I will shut my ears—I will close my eyes against it. Mother has left me a beggar—I am in a beggar's state—I shall pass my days in that state. To serve your feet, I will give up everything—I will relinquish every comfort. As a penance for all my former errors, I will lay down my body and life at your noble feet.

‘I have one more request to lay before you. If you should be indisposed to keep me with you

at once, you would kindly give me some employment like others in your school. When you will be satisfied with my working capacity, conduct and character, you would be pleased to permit me to serve your feet ; in that case, I shall have the opportunity to see your feet morning and evening. In fine, you must anyhow give me shelter under your noble feet. By a faithful discharge of the duties of two offices—those of my own office and of the Local Board office—I have been able to give satisfaction to my superiors, who are quite strangers and devoid of feelings of affection for me ; why should I then be unable to render satisfaction to you, my merciful father ? I can no more venture to live an idle life ; nor can I any more live separated from your noble feet.

‘Hemlata was offering me the keys to the boxes of my mother’s ornaments and plates, but I have advised her to present all those at your venerable feet.

‘Your unfortunate son,

(Sd.) ‘Narayan Chandra Sarma.’

What pathetic language ! In fact, Narayan Chandra was truly repentant of his former faults, whatever they might have been. There can be no doubt, that those faults were most serious, so much so that even such a naturally kind-hearted, forgiving father as Vidyasagar was constrained to banish the only dear son to a thousand miles from his heart. He was however ultimately softened,

allowed his son to live with him and nurse his sick-bed in his last days.

The second letter also shows how devotedly attached was Narayan Chandra to his beloved mother. So was Vidyasagar to his dear, faithful wife. Dinamayi was a perfect Hindu mistress. Like her mother-in-law, she took great delight in cooking food with her own hands and in feeding people. She was also very liberal in charities. Latterly she had many quarrels with her husband for the sake of her banished son, Narayan Chandra, which was the origin of the subsequent unpleasant disagreement. She often helped her son privately with moneys ; she even pawned her jewels, which constrained her husband to withhold making her gifts of money. Like her father, Satrugna, she was a woman of uncommon spirit, and magnanimity of heart. If ever she wanted her husband for a thing, and he refused it to her, she would be highly piqued. But Vidyasagar was equally strong-minded, and he would not care for her piquancy. Thus by degrees, the beloved couple had a great disagreement. But the loss of his dear wife revived in his tender heart the recollections of his former sweet conjugal life, and made him shed incessant tears. The recollections inflamed in him the blazing fire of regret for the disagreement of the latter days, which tended to aggravate the distressing symptoms of his painful malady.

But in spite of these serious disasters and catastrophes, he never for an instant lost sight of his duties. His educational institutions were always before his eyes. We have already said, that he had delegated some of his anxieties to his third son-in-law, Suryya Kumar Adhikari, whom he had made Principal of the Metropolitan Institution, and was thus somewhat relieved. But, as ill luck would have it, shortly after the death of his beloved wife, he was highly offended at Suryya Kumar's conduct and failure of duty, and was constrained to dismiss him. After the banishment of Narayan Chandra, he had taken to Suryya Kumar in the light of his own son, and treated him with the fondest affection. But he had a strong sense of duty, which topped the foremost of his affections. That he who could easily estrange his only son from his heart for failure of duty, should dismiss his son-in-law for a similar offence is no strange thing. But, at the same time, it ought to be confessed, that he must have considered the offence unpardonable.

After this, he had often to visit the Institution personally. He used to go there in a palanquin ; he was too weak to walk. After his fall from the chaise at Uttarpara, he very rarely travelled in horse-carriages. He had sufficient means to keep a coach and horse, but he had an aversion for articles of luxury. It is said, that he had once kept a close-carriage and a pair, but he was soon disgusted, and parted with them.

About this time, he offered the charge of the Institution to the Hon'ble Dr. Gurudas Banarji, one of the present native justices of the Calcutta High Court. But the Doctor declined to accept the responsibility on the very ostensible plea of inability. Gurudas regarded Vidyasagar in the same light as if he was his own father. He has compiled an Arithmetic. To get this work introduced as a text book for schools, it was only Vidyasagar whom he had requested for recommendation. He could not make himself flatter anybody else. Vidyasagar had an implicit faith in Gurudas, and therefore wanted to place the charge of his Institution on his shoulders, as he believed him fully equal to the task. The Doctor had also a very high opinion of our hero. On the occasion of his mother's *Sraddha*, Gurudas presented him with a very nice silver glass, as he knew that Vidyasagar was not accustomed to receive presents of money or any other kind ordinarily given away to Pandits on such occasions. The glass is still to be found in the possession of Narayan Chandra, who has, after his father's death, inherited all his property. It has the following *sloka* inscribed on it :—

“পানপাত্র দিৎ দত্তং বিদ্যাসাগর শ্রদ্ধাৰ্থে ।

স্বর্গকামনা যাতু গুরুদাসেন শ্রদ্ধা ।”

We have said before, that although Vidyasagar had very reluctantly deserted his native village for reasons already stated, he never for an instant

lost sight of it. The reader has seen how generously he had made provisions in his will for the good of the place. But, in the meantime the deadly Malarial Fever, which had caused a great havoc throughout lower Bengal, had also ravaged Birsingha, and had told seriously on the local English school, established by our hero. The institution had lost its existence. On the 14th April, 1890, Vidyasagar re-established the school, and named it 'The Birsingha Bhagavati School' after the name of his deceased, beloved mother.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE AGE OF CONSENT BILL.

In the meantime, our hero's constitution was gradually sinking, his health was failing him, and he was slowly losing his vitality. The reader has seen how he had all along struggled manfully with the worries and troubles of life and had always come out victorious. But alas ! who has ever won the grim gates of Death ? His deep-seated malady was being daily aggravated by heart-rending griefs at the loss of those nearest and dearest to his heart. Besides those enumerated before, he had to grieve and mourn over the death of his most beloved friends and relations. His very dear friends, Pyari Charan Sarkar, Syama Charan Biswas, Kristo Das Pal, Dinabandhu Mitra, and his second brother, Dinabandhu Nyayratna all had

departed from this world one by one, leaving him alone to pine away the last days of his existence, Dinabandhu Mitra was a great Bengali writer and Vidyasagar's most sincere friend. His lodgings stood very close to our hero's house in Sukea's Street. The two families were so intimately connected in friendship, that though they belonged to different castes, they made no distinction in friendly intercourse. When, on Dinabandhu Mitra's death, her poor widow with a number of helpless, little children, saw nothing but a blank vacuum all round her, it was only Vidyasagar who comforted her with assurances, and provided for the education of her sons. But for our benevolent hero, God knows what might not have happened to them.

In April, 1890, the looseness of his bowels took an alarmingly serious turn. He had been suffering from its effects for upwards of six years past. He had lost the strength of his digestive powers. These six years he had taken only one meal a day, composed of a little quantity of boiled rice and some fish-juice. Milk he had had to give up altogether. But from the beginning of 1890, his stomach could no more assimilate even such light food, as a small quantity of purbqiled rice. A little barley-water or sago was his only diet. In the latter part of the year, he was advised by his medical attendant, doctor Hira Lal Ghosh, to live a retired, secluded life. Vidyasagar said,—‘That

would be impossible while I am in Calcutta. I cannot refuse to receive visits ; nor can I place a *Darwan* (porter) at my gates'. Finally it was settled that he should leave the city. In the month of December, he went to French Chandernagore, in company with his eldest daughter, where a very nice two-storeyed house in a healthy locality by the side of the Bhagirathi had been rented for him. In this house he lived for some time, and showed signs of a little improvement.

Even in this sojourn for purposes of restoration of health, there was no cessation of his acts of benevolence and charity. Wheresoever he would be, the genial flow of his ever tender, ever gentle heart must find its way out. One day, a blind Mussulman beggar, led by his wife, was out in the streets a-begging. He wandered over the town for alms, but got nothing. At last, he presented himself before our noble hero. The sad tale of the beggar's misery touched his naturally kind heart. He gave the blind man some pice, and asked him,—‘What would you like to eat ?’ The beggar replied,—‘I have not eaten *Luchi* (wheat-flour bread fried in *Ghee*) for some time past. I feel a strong appetite for it.’ Vidyasagar at once had *Luchi* prepared by his daughter, and fed with it the poor, blind man and his wife sumptuously. After the repast had been over, he gave the beggar two rupees, and asked him to call every Sunday and partake of *Luchi* at his house. He also pro-

mitted to pay them eight annas monthly for their house-rent.

During his stay at Chandernagore, he used now and then to take strolls in the neighbouring places. On one occasion, he paid a visit to a Brahman of Bhadresvar, at his earnest request, accompanied by his third brother, Sambhu Chandra Vidyaratna. The host's son, who was a leper, offered our hero a *hookha* prepared with his own hands. Vidyasagar ungrudgingly took the *hookha* from his hands, and smoked it as usual. On their way back, Sambhu Chandra remonstrated with him, and asked him how he could persuade himself to smoke the tobacco prepared by a leper's hands. Vidyasagar very seriously said,—‘God forbid, supposing you or I myself had been a leper, what would I do?’ Sambhu Chandra had nothing to say against it.

Some time before this, a Bill had been introduced into the Legislature Council for amendment of the Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code on certain sections relating to the Age of Consent on the part of females to sexual intercourse. The Government, as on all important matters of legislation, asked Vidyasagar for his opinion on the point. In this connection, he had to leave Chandernagore and return to Calcutta for a week. He studied deeply the different *Sūtras* on religious points, and on the 16th February, 1891, gave his opinion opposing the

Bill in the form in which it had been introduced into the Council, and suggesting a measure consonant to the religious usage of the Hindus. His opinion was that as *Garbhadhana Sanskara* was a religious usage in conformity with the Sastras, binding on every Hindu, and as there was no certainty at what age a female might have her first menses (the period when the *Garbhadhana Sanskara* should be performed), the placing of a restriction on the age limit for the consent of the female would be a direct interference with the religious customs of the country. He, therefore, very wisely indicated a way in accordance with the Sastras, which if adopted would give the desired protection to the child-wives. To enable the reader to form an idea of his opinion on the point, we crave indulgence to quote below some portions of his Note on the subject :—

* * *

“Though on these grounds I cannot support the Bill as it is, I should like the measure to be so framed as to give something like an adequate protection to child-wives, without in any way conflicting with any religious usage. I would propose that it should be an offence for a man to consummate marriage before his wife has had her first menses. As the majority of girls do not exhibit that symptom before they are thirteen, fourteen or fifteen, the measure I suggest would give larger, more real, and more extensive protection than the Bill. At

the same time, such a measure could not be objected to on the ground of interfering with a religious observance.

* * * *

"From every point of view, therefore, the most reasonable course appears to me, to make a law declaring it penal for a man to have intercourse with his wife, before she has her first menses.

"Such a law would not only serve the interests of humanity by giving reasonable protection to child-wives, but would, so far from interfering with religious usage, enforce a rule laid down in the Sastras. The punishment, which the Sastras prescribe for violation of the rule, is of a spiritual character and is liable to be disregarded. The religious prohibition would be made more effective, if it was embodied in a penal law. I may be permitted to press this consideration most earnestly on the attention of the Government.

Sd. "Isvara Chandra Sarma

The 16th February 1891."

But this time the Government did not accept his views. In spite of his very reasonable opposition, the Bill was passed. It is a manner displays the policy of the alien Government in the administration of this country. When this Vidyasagar had petitioned for a legislation on the re-marriage of Hindu widows, his prayer had been readily granted. Widow-marriage is consonant to the feelings, customs, and policy of the ruling race.

The same Vidyasagar proposed a measure on the Age of Consent Bill, which, if adopted, would have saved both sides, but it was rejected, although it was not wholly conflicting with the views of the rulers. Was it because, this time, the Government was afraid of losing its prestige ?

The Hindu Society was glad to find that Vidyasagar did not fall into errors in his discussion of the Age of Consent question, as he had done on the occasion of Widow Marriage movement. Some even went so far as to fancy, that it was his own conviction of his former errors that led him to oppose a Bill interfering with the religious usage of the Hindus. Besides, Vidyasagar had kept himself aloof, for some time past, from taking part in the re-marriage of Hindu widows, which also served to make the people draw this portrait in their mind. The advocates of widow marriage, however, attribute his apathy to his own ill-health and to the want of firmness and faithlessness of his country-men, which might be the more probable cause. We have already said, that he was no hypocrite, and had he been really convinced of his errors, he would never have been afraid to declare it openly. Moreover, it is said that even so late as a little before his death, he tried to give his own grandson (daughter's son) in widow marriage. There can be no doubt that he was disappointed at the conduct of some of his followers, who had subsequently forsaken him, which,

in his opinion, so much impeded the progress of widow marriage. Perhaps, it was this sad disappointment, which led him to exult when the news of Babu Durga Mohan Das's widow marriage reached him, though such an alliance was against his principle, as the woman whom Durga Mohan had taken to be his wife, had been an old widow with several children by her first husband. This marriage took place only two months before Vidyasagar's departure from this world. On the occasion he wrote a letter to 'Durga Mohan' in Bengali to the following effect :—

'My dear friend,

'I am glad to hear that your desires have been satisfied. I heartily wish and pray that you may pass the remaining days of your life in happiness with your new consort. Communicate my tender compliments and blessings to her.'

CHAPTER XXXV.

DEPARTURE FROM THE WORLD. .

After the submission of his Note on the Age of Consent Bill, he went back again to Chander-nagore, where he was comparatively better, if it might be called so, up to the middle of April, when he was able to take even rice for two days. But, unfortunately, by the end of the month, his illness again took a bad turn, which made his eldest daughter, Hemlata, who had accompanied him,

return to Calcutta and perform the rites of penances for the absolution of her dear father's sins according to the *Sastras* at an expense of nearly 800 rupees. But this was of no avail. By the second week of June, he had suddenly a pain in his side regions. Nothing could relieve him of the pain. He then came back to Calcutta in company with his grandson, Jatis Chandra. Here he placed himself for a few days under Electro-Homeopathic treatment, which also failed to give him relief. He now resolved to give up opium, which he had been eating for some time past in medicinal doses for his Dysentery. He said,—‘Opium requires the drinking of milk ; but milk I cannot digest, and therefore I have given it up. Without milk, opium is injurious ; it rather brings on costiveness. I should like to take such medicines, as would help me to give up the habit without discomfort.’ His Allopathic medical attendants, Babus Hira Lal ghosh and Amulya Charan Basu, were afraid of danger in his giving up the opium all at once. But some others were of different opinion, and Abdul Latif, a Mussulman Hakim, was called in, who gave the required medicines. When he had taken these medicines for two days, his illness grew worse. The pain aggravated ; drowsiness came on ; hiccup made its appearance. Every one was now alarmed. Nearly a month passed in this state. By the end of the second week of July, Messrs Birch and M’Connel, two renowned European medical

officers, were called in. They suspected Cancer in the abdomen. They thought the case hopeless, and refused to take charge of the patient. For a few days more, he remained under the treatment of Hira Lal and Amulya Charan. But there was no relief. Some times the symptoms—hiccup, costiveness, pain—showed signs of improvement, but that was only for a short duration ; they again set in with redoubled force. This state of things continued up to the 14th July. On the next day, Dr. Salzer, the best Homeopathist, was called in. For the first few days, Dr. Salzer's Homeopathic treatment seemed to give the patient a little relief. Previously, his bowels had to be moved by the application of enema, but they now had a free motion. Dr. Salzer suspected Ulcer. He said,—‘The jaundice, which has set in, may lessen in a short time. If it should not so lessen, the patient may die in seven days ; and even if it should lessen, still there is very little chance of the life being prolonged for more than a month.’ For diet, ass's milk was prescribed. Even this milk he could not assimilate. His vitality began to decline day by day. The hiccup increased and decreased by turns. He could not bear the rattling of carriages. To prevent it, straw was spread over the adjacent streets and lanes.* The Calcutta Municipality sympathised with him by interdicting their Scavenger carts passing by those streets.

On the 19th July, Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar

paid the patient a visit. He was of opinion that the chronic Dysentery was the root of all. The other medical attendants used to call at regular intervals, see the patient, and then go away to their respective business ; but Amulya Charan attended the sick man day and night, nursed him with great care, and watched the course of the disease with the keenest interest. Vidyasagar loved him very dearly like his own son. He also looked upon him with filial regard as if the patient was his own father. We have said, that Narayan Chandra was permitted by his father to tend him in his last days. He also attended the sick-bed with the tenderest care.

Fever, which had already set in, gradually increased day by day. The temperature rose on and on, till at last complete prostration came over the patient on the 20th July, 1901. He could no more rise from his bed. He suffered from intense pain accompanied by incessant hiccup, being apparently ameliorated at distant intervals by occasional slight reliefs. This state continued up to the 26th July.

On the 24th July, suggestions were made for a fresh will. Babu Golap Chandra Sastri, a renowned pleader of the High Court, drew up a draft of the last Testament. But Vidyasagar could not subscribe to it. He took time to think over his educational institutions, which he intended placing under a committee of management. In

the meantime, the malady grew more serious, and deprived of his senses.

On Sunday, the 27th July, the condition of the patient became most alarming. The temperature rose on and on ; drowsiness and stupor set in, with redoubled force ; difficulty of breathing was observed at short intervals. Kaviraj Brajendra Kumar Sen, a well-known native physician of Calcutta (since deceased), who was attending and watching the patient for the last few days ; became hopeless. Kviraj Bijay Ratna Sen, another reputed physician, was called in. He saw the patient for the first time. His opinion was, he said, that the internal state of the sufferer was not so bad as it appeared outwardly. But alas ! Oh cruel destiny ! The disease became worse and worse. On the next day, Monday, the patient was in a state of insensibility. With the disease increased also its concomitant agonies. But the sufferer bore with them patiently. His face was as placid and calm as ever. He never gave expression to his internal physical pains. So long that he had not lost his consciousness, he would not allow any one else to remove his evacuations, and if ever anybody tried to do it, he showed signs of displeasure. His tender heart was easily moved at the distress of others, but he never gave expression to even his own excruciating pains ; he put up with them with calm fortitude.

On one occasion, he had gone to a Book

seller's, accompanied by his younger grandson (daughter's son), Jatis Chandra. Quite unexpectedly, a long, heavy iron bar fell upon one of his feet. The pain was intense, and would have disabled every other man ; but he preserved a stoic silence, and returned home in his palanquin. When Jatis Chandra asked his dear grandpapa, if he felt any pain in the part affected, he smiled, and only said,—‘ Don't speak of pain ; if the accident had occurred to any of you, surely your cries of agony would have resounded through the whole neighbourhood, and there would have been no reckoning how many doctors would have to be called in.’ He had once got a very painful carbuncle when he was at Karmatar. He came first of all to Burdwan for treatment, but finding no relief there, he was at last obliged to come down to Calcutta. In a few days, the abscess suppurated and required surgical operation. On the day of performance, he was engaged in conversing with Dina Nath Mallik of Parsibagan respecting the partition of their ancestral property. In the meantime, doctor Chandra Mohan Ghosh, the surgeon in attendance, had opened the carbuncle, evacuated all the accumulated pus and poisoned blood, and dressed the wound. The patient gave not the slightest utterance to his pain ; not a muscle of his face moved. When the conversation was over, Dina Nath requested the doctor to do the needful, but he was quite surprised to hear

that the abscess had already been operated upon and dressed, and that it was in reality a carbuncle. Such was the uncommon fortitude Vidyasagar possessed. Even in the agonised death-bed, he displayed the same extraordinary fortitude.

The whole of Tuesday, the 29th July, 1901, was a prolonged period of intense anxiety and fearful suspense. Every hope was extinct. The patient lay in the room, where hung his mother's portrait. He had been laid down with his head on the north side, while his mother's picture was hanging on the eastern wall. He was quite speechless and evidently insensible ; but, by what enchantment God knows, the dying man in an instant turned himself with his head to the west, exactly facing the likeness of his beloved mother. He then gazed intently at the portrait, and shed an incessant torrent of tears.

All hopes were gone. Every moment was anticipated to be the last. The son, daughters, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, friends, relations, dependents, all watched the movements of the face with close attention. But it was as calm and tranquil as ever ; no expression of internal agonies was visible in it ; the countenance was very placid. The morning, noon, afternoon passed in this state of utter suspense. In the evening, the hard breathings which had already begun, became feebler and feebler, till it was almost inaudible. The pulse, which had already begun to fall down, sank and

sank and sank, till it was almost imperceptible. The numerous doctors and Kavirajes came in and went out every few minutes, talking in inaudible whispers, with sad despondence depicted in their faces. The great crowd of relatives, friends, and visitors awaited the fatal issue with mournful silence. The thin and feeble wick of the pale, flickering light of life of the ever-merciful, great man was fast dying out. At last, the last symptoms of early dissolution of the body set in ; the difficult breathing became more and more rattling and impeded ; the pulse quite imperceptible. At 11 P. M. in the night, the breathing could be felt only in the navel. This last struggle continued for upwards of three hours, relaxing every moment, till 2-18 A. M. following, when his last breath was drawn. Not a moan escaped his lips, not a muscle of his feature moved. The friends and relations, particularly the female portion, were frantic with grief. They struck their breasts and foreheads with their fists, loudly bemoaning their fate, and filling the whole neighbourhood with pitiful lamentations, which no body had the heart to prevent. Thus ended the worldly life of the great man, who had struggled manfully with adverse circumstances from his very early years to the last days of his existence.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TERMINATION.

All was over. Amidst the fearful lamentations, preparations were made by the friends of the deceased for the performance of the last rites according to the dictates of the *Sastras*. Dressed in purest white, supported on the softest bedding, the corpse was placed on the very nice cot, upon which he used to sleep in his life-time. At 4 A. M. the mournful funeral procession proceeded in the direction of the place of cremation by the side of the Bhagirathi. The uncovered stretcher with its majestic burden was borne on the shoulders of the son, grandsons, brothers, other relatives, and friends. On its way, the sorrowful cortege once stopped a while before the Metropolitan Institution building. Here Narayan Chandra cried out in loud, pathetic terms, and invoked the blessing of his parent, saying,—‘Oh ! my beloved father, here stands your dear Metropolitan.’ Bless me from heaven—give me power to preserve your noble work.’ The pathetic appeal so affected the processionists, that each of them was moved to a flood of tears. The procession moved on with sad, slow steps, and at 5 O’clock reached the Nimtala cremation Ghat, where two days previously, another powerful, great Indian, Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra, had lain to rest for ever.

Before the melancholy night dawned upon the mournful city, the sad intelligence had spread through the streets that the great *Dayar Sagar* Vidyasagar was no more ! Hundreds of people of all classes, ages, and sexes ran with all their speed to the burning Ghat to have a last look. Many considered themselves fortunate to be able to touch the precious stretcher. The brothers of the deceased wanted to commence the cremation before sun-rise, but the grandsons desired to have a photograph taken of the corpse. The famous Indian photographer, Babu Sarat Chandra Sen, was sent for, and the photograph was taken just as the morning sun peeped into the melancholy scene from the gloomy eastern horizon. The assemblage was now very large, hundreds having in the meantime multiplied into thousands, every one eager to catch a last glimpse of the great man. The numerous women, who had gone to bathe in the sacred Bhagirathi, forgot their business and gathered in the place of cremation, many of them shedding profuse tears of sincere grief for the departed. There were people of all denominations and castes in the immense gathering, the concourse behind pressing the thick crowd in front, eagerly intent on having a last look. The Nimtala cremation Ghat witnessed a scene unequalled in dignified, solemn impressiveness by anything since its foundation. Some time was thus passed to satisfy the eager desire

of the thousands of mourning spectators. At last, the body was washed with the holy waters of the Bhagirathi, and a last photograph was taken of the precious corpse. At about half past six O'clock early in the morning, the invaluable body was gently laid on the pyre, composed solely of sandal wood, already procured from the different quarters of the city. The son, Narayan Chandra, took up a blazing torch of Ghee in his right hand, and with mournful tears and lamentations applied it to the pyre just below where the face lay. As the funeral pile began to burn vehemently, even the clouds of the rainy July stood aghast, gazing intently on the mournful scene. The cremation took nearly five hours. At about 11 A. M., the fire of the pyre was quenched with the sacred waters of the Bhagirathi. The mourners and followers gathered the ashes and took them to their houses. The two grandsons, Sures Chandra and Jatis Chandra, brought home two urn-fuls of ashes. The rest was washed away in a few days into the Bhagirathi. Nothing remained of the great man. What did we say? Did we say, *nothing* remained? Oh! how greatly mistaken we are! There remained his noble deeds to perpetuate his memory. There remained his recollection in the heart of every native of Bengal. After the funeral obsequies were over, alms were given to the mendicants, and at about noon, the mournful procession returned home. For a fort-

night hence, the friends of the great man sang *Sankirtan* at the place where his remains rested for ever.

In no time was the sad intelligence spread throughout the length and breadth of the country. Then followed griefs and lamentations not only in India, but all over the world. The newspapers, both English and Vernacular, appeared in mourning, bearing the sorrowful tidings and describing the great man according to their respective ideas. This was what the *Pioneer* of Allahabad wrote in its issue of the 29th July, 1891 :—"He was a brilliant educationist, and well-known for his labours in the promotion of Hindu Widow Re-marriage." The *Statesman* of Calcutta of the same date said ;—"Another of the foremost men of Bengal has gone over to the majority." The *Indian Daily News*, in its issue of the 30th July, wrote ;—"Death has again this week carried away another of the brightest jewels of India." The *Englishman* of Calcutta of the same date said ;—"A man of rare gifts and broad sympathies." Even the journals of Europe and America joined in the same chorus. An American paper went so far as to compare the great Vidyasagar with the truly renowned Statesman, Gladstone of England.

All the private schools and colleges of the city, as well as those of the interior of the country, were closed in honour of the deceased great man. The students of the Metropolitan Institution gave

up wearing shoes. The booksellers of Calcutta, stock-brokers, and shop-keepers of Radhabazar closed their shops and offices. In the city, condolence meetings were held in the premises of the Metropolitan, the Sanskrit, and the Presidency Colleges, presided over by the Hon'ble Dr. Gurudas Banarji, the famous Pandit Bhuvan Mohan Vidyaratna of Navadvip, and the well-known professor Mr. Tawny respectively. Similar meetings were also held at Howra, Hugli, Serampore, Burdwan, Gowhati, Dacca, Barisal, Tippera, Kuch-Bihar, and other towns in the interior—even in Hyderabad in the remote south of India. At the meeting of Dacca, presided over by the celebrated writer, Ray Kali Prasanna Ghosh Bahadur, Raja Rajendra Narayan Ray Bahadur of Bhawal, with a view to perpetuate the memory of the deceased great man, offered 3,000 rupees to be deposited in the funds of the Dacca College, out of the interest of which amount, a scholarship of ten rupees a month, to be named "The Vidyasagar Scholarship", was to be awarded to such a student of the Dacca College, as would pass the Calcutta University Entrance Examination with highest marks in Sanskrit, provided he failed to secure any other scholarship. At the meeting held in the premises of the Kaliganja School building, a medal was offered to the best essayist on Vidyasagar's biography among the students of the school. In almost each of these meetings prizes

and medals were offered in memory of the great Vidyasagar. Besides these, Libraries and Dispensaries were opened in different places in his name.

On the 27th August, 1891, a grand meeting, presided over by Sir Charles Eliott, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, was held in the Town Hall of Calcutta to consider the means of perpetuating the memory of Pandit Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar and Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra. Among those present were Sir Comer Petheram, the then Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, the Hon'ble Dr. Gurudas Banarji, Maharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore, Raja Pyari Mohan Mukharji, and a number of European and native gentlemen of high station and influence. As a fruit of that meeting, a statue of the first Principal of the Sanskrit College has been set up in the College-building as a tribute of respect to the great man.

But is this sufficient? Who is to answer the question? The natives of Bengal must consider themselves fortunate that they have been able to do so much. Most surely, they have won a very bad name that they are great in words, but small in deeds. How often have they assembled in large gatherings, rending the walls of the room with loud vociferations of their thundering eloquence, and how often have they failed in deeds! In fact, these persons are objects of great pity. The practice of holding meetings to express grief for the departed and to raise funds for raising monuments in

honour of the deceased was unknown to this country till lately. It was first inaugurated by our present rulers, whom we try to copy in all matters. But it should be borne in mind that Europeans are not full of mere empty words ; like us, they are not so apt to break their promise at every step ; what they say they do with all their power ; they never shirk it.

Even the enlightened Indian ladies founded a Memorial Committee, and raised 1,670 rupees from among themselves, which they made over to the authorities of the Bethune School for the foundation of a scholarship in the name of Vidyasagar to perpetuate his memory. We quote below an extract from the annual report of the school for the year 1894, which speaks for itself.

"In presence of His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India—Lord Elgin and many other notable European and Indian gentlemen—Bethune College—5th. March 1894.—Report,

* * * *

"The Committee beg to announce that they have recently received the sum of Rs 1670 from the Secretary to the Ladies' Vidyasagar Memorial Committee in Calcutta for the establishment of an annual scholarship tenable for two years to be awarded to a Hindu girl who after passing the annual examination in the third class of the School, desires to prepare herself for the University Entrance Examination. The late Pundit

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was the co-adjutor and fellow-worker of Mr. Bethune, when the school was founded, and since then continued, so long as he lived, to take the keenest interest in its welfare. It is therefore a source of great gratification to the Committee to find that a body of Hindu ladies in Calcutta should have interested themselves in this manner to perpetuate the memory of the late Pundit Vidyasagar who, during his lifetime, in addition to the philanthropic work to which he devoted his whole life, had done so much to promote Female Education in Bengal.

Sd. "M. Ghose.

"Secretary."

The Hon'ble C. E. Buckland says :—" His (Vidyasagar's) death was largely mourned throughout Bengal and various memorials of a more or less imposing character have been inaugurated in many important educational centres, including the metropolis. His fame has established itself throughout the country. Though persecuted for his reform movements, he never lost heart but maintained his faith in the ultimate triumph of Truth and Justice."

Exactly four years after the death of our noble hero, a meeting presided over by the Hon'ble Dr. Gurudas Banarji was held in the Emerald Theatre (since converted to the Classic Theatre). At this meeting, the great Bengali poet, Babu Rabiindra Nath Tagore read a paper in Bengali on Vidya-

sagar. In one part of the paper, he said ;—‘We begin a thing, but never finish it ; we make a great show, but never do anything ; what we commence we do not believe ; what we believe, we never perform ; we can compose largest sentences, but we cannot sacrifice self in the least.’ The Hon’ble President, in deep despondency, said ;—‘I see no harm in that we have failed to erect a monument ; Vidyasagar himself is engraved in the heart of every native of Bengal.’ This was no doubt an expression of helpless consolation arising out of heart-rending disappointment. But even taking it in a serious light, the noble deeds and works of Vidyasagar are no doubt his best monuments. Oil painting, metal statue, marble image—nothing can escape the destructive hands of age. But the name and fame of a man never perish ; they are ever-lasting.

After his death, many poems, odes, and elegies, both long and short, appeared in the different vernacular periodicals,—daily, weekly, fortnightly, and monthly. They testify to the degree of veneration and love with which he reigned in the hearts of his country-men.

FINIS.

CHARACTER.

We have done our best to delineate the principal traits of Vidyasagar's character. No one can deny his greatness and superiority. There can be no doubt that Vidyasagar was truly great. He was great in kindness, great in broad sympathy, great in benevolence, great in parts ; in short, he was greater in every respect than men of ordinary rank. It was this singular superiority of his, that enabled him to struggle manfully with difficulties—to rise to such dignified eminence. This extraordinary peculiarity of his character was manifest in all his deeds, however good or evil results they might have been productive of.

Vidyasagar was born at a time when this land of ancient civilisation urgently required the services of a great man like him. Whenever a country needs revolution of any kind, it gives birth to a man of extraordinary powers to accomplish the end. History furnishes us with plenty of instances to illustrate the truth of this fact. Vidyasagar was born at a time, when the Kali Yuga was exercising its deteriorating influence on the scientific religion of the saintly Rishis. Vidyasagar with his uncommon parts and abilities was only the medium through which the influence was exercised. He consummated what his predecessor, Ram Mohan Ray, who had gone to the eternity six decades before him, had begun. The Hon'ble

Dr. Gurudas Banarji, the president of the memorial meeting held at the Metropolitan Institution, in his presidential speech, said ;—‘He (Vidyasagar) was second to none except one—the great Ram Mohan Ray.’ In fact, Vidyasagar followed ‘the footsteps of his predecessor ; he pursued the course dictated by the Age. Had he been born a century before or after his epoch, it is very doubtful whether he would have been able to win such universal respect and reputation. A man wins honour and celebrity in society, when he pursues the course indicated by the Age. Vidyasagar did it, and his reputation soon rose to its highest eminence. Or else, why should he, being born in an orthodox Hindu family, surrounded from his early years by devout followers of the religion of the Rishis, himself vastly erudite in the different branches of the Sanskrit Literature, thus lose his regard for the religious usages and practices of his forefathers, and be deprived of the power of casting an insight into the true import of the sacred Sastras of his ancestors? It was God’s dispensation. The merciful Father, with a view to the prevalence of the influence of the Age, implanted in his heart the germs of broad sympathy and kindness so deeply and strongly, that his knowledge of the Sastras and the religion of his fathers disappeared wholly ; no vestige of it remained to guide him in the right direction. His naturally tender heart was moved at the apparent

distress of Hindu widows. To remove the ostensible miseries of Kulin women, he petitioned the alien Government for legislation preventing the old practice of polygamy. But alas! he did not stop for a moment to reflect that Hindu marriage was not a legal contract but a religious alliance or what was the ultimate end of Brahmacharyya or from what source and with what view it was prescribed, or how his innovation would hinder the fulfilment of that end and materially undermine the basis of the Hindu Society; his infinite natural tenderness of heart would allow him no time to reflect on these points. It was this tenderness and kindness that made him forget the true import of the holy Sastras and the religion of his fathers. So it is unmistakably clear, that excessive kindness and self-reliance were the principal elements of his character; everything else vanished before them. Vidyasagar was a man of the Age; he followed the course indicated by it. No doubt, this course has brought on a great mischief to the real Hindu, has materially injured the Hindu religion, has propelled the Hindu Society with great force in the direction of disorganisation; but Vidyasagar ought not to be blamed for it, God alone, Who made him with such materials, knows why he did so.

This is the essence of Vidyasagar's character. Sincerity and earnestness were the fundamental bases of that character. We would earnestly

pray that every one should endeavour to acquire this sincerity and earnestness, and with this sincerity and earnestness apply himself diligently to follow ~~in the footsteps~~ of his forefathers according to ~~the~~ dictates of his own Scripture, and thereby achieve his own end.

The Hon'ble C. E. Buckland, speaking of Vidyasagar in the appendix to his 'Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governor,' says ;—"The life of this eminent Bengali was remarkable on several grounds, and may be studied from ~~different~~ aspects ; (1) as an educational officer, ~~(2) as~~ author and editor of various publications in Bengali, Sanskrit and English, chiefly of an educational character, (3) as a social reformer, and lastly (4) as a philanthropist. He combined a fearless independence of character with great gentleness and the simplicity of a child in his dealings with people of all classes. A stern disciplinarian, he could yet forgive the shortcomings of others less gifted and less exact than himself. He was a model of patience and perseverance in literary work." Sir Roper Lethbridge says ;—"Vidyasagar was the very ideal of a high-minded, intelligent and benevolent Brahmin of the old school.

